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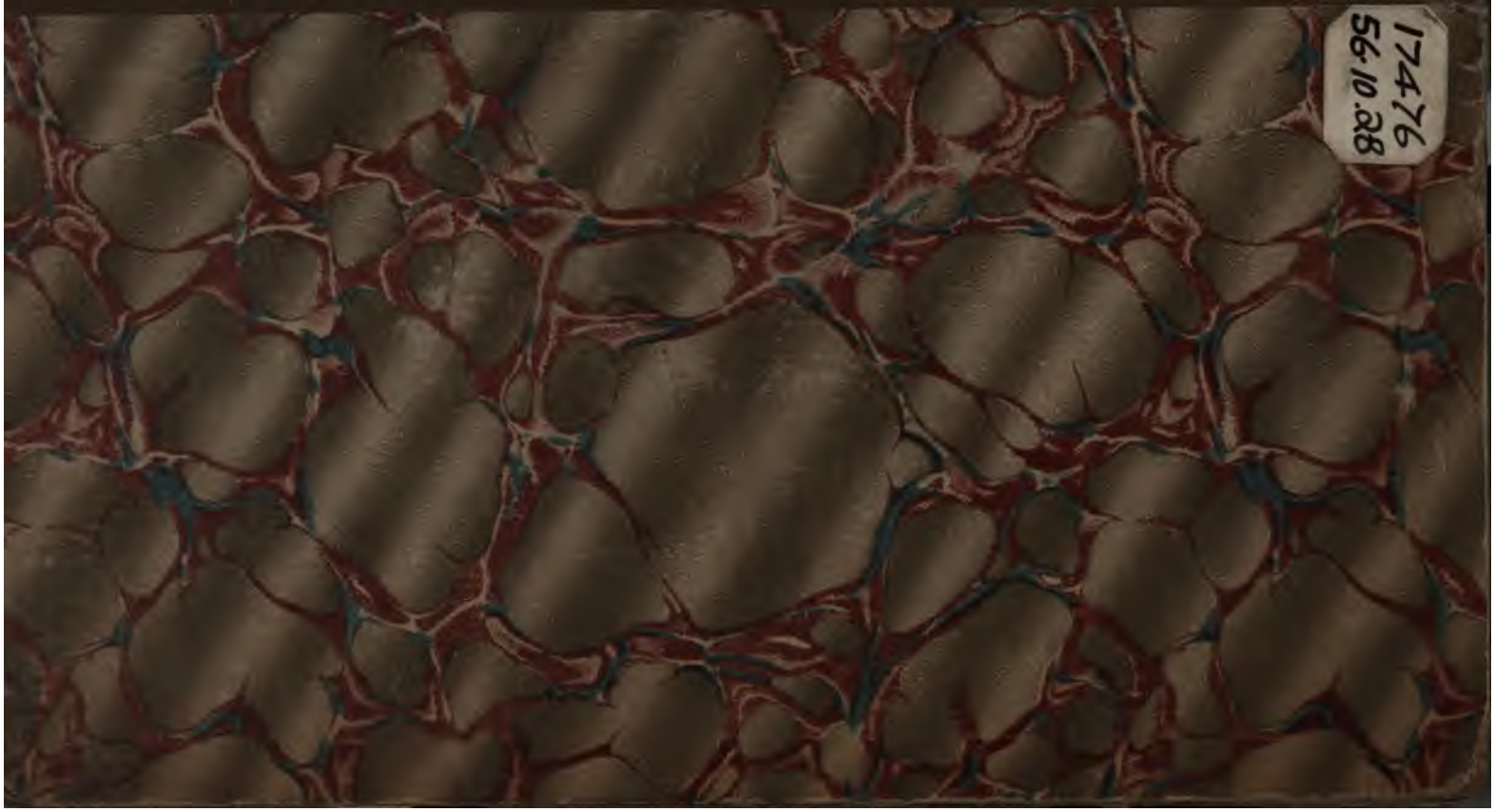

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MARY STUART:

An Historical Tragedy,

NOW PERFORMING

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL DRURY LANE.

BY JAMES HAYNES,

AUTHOR OF "CONSCIENCE," "DURAZZO," &c.

Second Edition.

LONDON:

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FROM
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TO

W. C. MACREADY, Esq.

My dear Sir,

It is not in the formal spirit of a dedicator, but with the heart-felt gratitude of a deeply-obliged friend, that I beg of you to accept the dedication of this Tragedy. It owes you every thing—its production on the stage—its adaptation to the stage—its preparation—its success. The main elements of that success were, the solicitude with which you watched its progress, and the power with which you grasped the character of Ruthven, seized on all the points, whether prominent or latent, and drove them through the public heart by the energy of your performance. But, perhaps, this is a topic, which, instead of dilating upon myself, I ought to leave to that fame which cannot be charged with flattery. For all your kindness—for all your exertion—for the position, such as it is, in which I now stand among the Dramatists of the day, and which I could not have reached without your assistance, accept this humble, but sincere, tribute of gratitude from

Your obliged, and devoted Friend,

JAMES HAYNES.

Morland's Hotel, Dean Street, Soho.
February 1, 1840.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN I first turned my attention to the subject of RIZZIO's death, as the ground work of a Tragedy, I was chiefly attracted by the fierce grandeur of RUTHVEN's character. It appeared to me, that the picture, which historians had drawn of that remarkable personage, was well calculated for poetical, and even for dramatic effect. Accordingly, I embarked my humble powers, with more ardour than consideration, in the attempt to construct a Play out of the existing materials, little thinking, at the time, what difficulties my imagination had concealed from my judgment. It was not, until I had proceeded too far to retract, (for no man likes to throw away his labour,) that I discovered how much the scantiness of the materials, the nature of the subject, and even the tone of the characters, were calculated to obstruct my design. RUTHVEN was too savage, and RIZZIO too despicable, to be faithfully represented on the stage; and

Mary's attachment to her favourite could not be rendered prominent, without the greatest danger, nor evaded, without suppressing the only circumstance, that could palliate, or indeed account for the sanguinary act. I do not presume to say, that I have surmounted these difficulties,—that I have produced scenes which, without countenancing the imputation of actual guilt, are still sufficiently marked by indiscretion, to soften the otherwise unmitigated horror of the catastrophe: but it was my intention to have done so; and I have stated the disadvantages peculiar to the subject itself, as an apology for those defects with which the Drama may be otherwise fairly chargeable.

To the Ladies and Gentlemen, whose talents in the performance of the different characters have contributed so much to the success of "MARY STUART" on the stage, and to every one concerned in its preparation, I beg to offer my most cordial thanks for their zealous and able assistance.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY STUART, EARL OF DARNLEY, &c. *(titular King of Scotland)*	Mr. PHELPS.
JAMES, EARL OF MORTON, ...	Mr. G. BENNETT.
LORD LINDSAY, ...	Mr. WALDRON.
MAITLAND OF LETHINGTON, ...	Mr. H. MARSTON.
GEORGE DOUGLAS, ...	Mr. HOWE.
CHALMERS, ...	Mr. KING.
THE EARL OF RUTHVEN, ...	Mr. MACREADY.
DAVID RIZZIO, ...	Mr. ELTON.
EARL OF BOTHWELL, ...	Mr. YARNOLD.
EARL OF HUNTLEY, ...	Mr. HEATH.
SIR NICHOLAS THROGMORTON *(Ambassador from England)*	Mr. J. W. RAY.
SIR JAMES MELVILLE, ...	Mr. J. LEE.
GARCIA, ...	Mr. ROBERTS.

MARY STUART *(Queen of Scotland)*		Mrs. WARNER.
THE COUNTESS OF ARGYLE, ...		Mrs. W. WEST.
LADY CATHERINE *(Daughter of Lord Ruthven)*		Miss E. MONTAGUE.
CELINE,	*(Foreign Ladies in attendance on the Queen.*	Miss COOPER.
MARGUERITE,		Miss PETTIFER.

Suitors, Attendants, &c.

MARY STUART.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Court Yard before MORTON'S *House.*

Enter MORTON, *followed by* LINDSAY.

MORTON.

So! Maitland not yet come? no letter! no
Dispatch! not even a message!

LINDSAY.

None, my Lord,
But what I've told you.

MORTON.

That was nothing! nothing!
Forgive me, Lindsay; but my mind's so harass'd
I cannot speak in measured courtesy:
To think that he should loiter at a time
Like this, when Scotland's fate is in the balance!
Nay, let me hear again what 'twas he said,
If he said ought.

LINDSAY.

The words would signify
That pressing business called him for awhile
Another way; but I should scarce have time
To tell you so, when he 'd be here himself—
And look!—

Enter MAITLAND.

MORTON.

'Tis he! Well, Maitland! what success?
What tidings from the West?

MAITLAND.

Throughout the track
I 've measured in my journey, discontent
Was every where—the storm-cloud fills the sky:—
From every pulpit loud anathemas
Are thundered at the Queen:—her enmity
To the true worship shakes the crown upon
Her head: nor is her love of foreigners
Forgotten, nor her deadly hatred of
The banished Lords: in short, some dire explosion
Is ripening fast; we must direct it, or
Be swept away by 't.

MORTON.

Well; and what have you
Done for our cause?

MAITLAND.

What every honest man
Would wish to see were done. I urged the People
To send in strong petitions for the pardon
Of Murray.

MORTON.

That was well: 'tis the sole hope
Of Scotland now. His pardon and return
Would still controul the headlong course of ruin
The Queen seems bent on. Did they promise you?

MAITLAND.

All—to a man: there 's noble stuff amongst 'em.
Before yon sun shall dive into the West
I 'll have some score of grave remonstrances

To back our efforts for his quick recall.
But how have matters prospered in my absence
With you at home?

MORTON.

E'en as you left 'em—badly.
The King is still estranged from us; the Queen
As much as ever in the hands of Rizzio.
French counsels are the fashion, and we hear
Nothing of England but abuse. The Pope,
In spite of all John Knox's rhetoric,
Builds up his Church anew, and sees it prosper,
While murmurs, half suppressed, tell of the ire
That's bursting for an outbreak.

MAITLAND.

Then, the more
Our need of Murray's presence: let us strive
For its accomplishment: his influence,
As brother to the Queen, combining with
His other qualities, gives him great power.

LINDSAY.

Look, my good Lord,
A scion of your noble house approaches.

MORTON.

An offshoot from the stem. Young George was born
Of some fair sinner to a Douglas, who
Besought and won us to acknowledge him.
But here he is. Well, George!

Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS.

DOUGLAS.

Not well, my Lord,
If I may judge. Ha! noble Maitland, welcome
To Edinburgh once more.

MAITLAND.

Thanks, gallant friend.
But how is this? you spoke complainingly
As you came in—I know you 're not a croaker:
What is the latest news?

DOUGLAS.

A pageant, Sir:—
I stopped upon the way to see it move;
And who, d'ye think, led on the bright array,
Shining like stars before it?

MAITLAND.

Why, the King
And Queen, of course.

DOUGLAS.

There was another still:—
Guess who that other was.

MAITLAND.

Not Bothwell?

DOUGLAS.

No.

MORTON.

Nor Lenox?

DOUGLAS.

Nor yet Lenox.

MAITLAND.

Was it Sir James?
I mean the Queen's adviser, prudent Melville?

DOUGLAS.

You cannot, or you will not, look so low
As truth must drag you. What would'st say if Rizzio
Made up the third?—King, Queen, and David Rizzio!!

MAITLAND.

Impossible!

DOUGLAS.

Not to those eyes that saw him.

MORTON.

And how did Rizzio seem to bear his state?

DOUGLAS.

Like one who had a ponderous weight to carry—
His own importance: and i' faith he carried it
With a high head. The King spoke little to him,
But the Queen smiled, and that was all he cared for.

MORTON.

'Tis through his artifice that Rome prevails—
Through *him* that bigot's plot, the Bayonne league,
Which binds 'em to extirpate Protestants,
Finds favour with the Queen!—all his contrivance.

MAITLAND.

Well, let 's succeed in bringing Murray back.

DOUGLAS.

Would we could put your project to the proof!
But that 's impossible:—the only man
Whose boldness might accomplish such an end
Is dying.

MORTON.

Ha! you speak of Ruthven?—What!
Is he——

DOUGLAS.

There 's not an hour of breath in his lungs.

MORTON.

Your evidence? What is your evidence?
He 's of the Titan breed, in mind and body:
A mountain of the North.

DOUGLAS.

Mountains have fallen;
And rocks have sunk; and Ruthven's race is run—
I left his chamber but an hour ago;—
He looked a corpse.

MORTON.

How could you waste the time
In talking of a foolish pageant, when
You had a fact like this to tell?

DOUGLAS.

Because
My hate of Rizzio, and my scorn of folly,
Were greater than my fear.

MORTON.

You think too much
Of your own wrongs;—all's lost, if Ruthven's lost.

DOUGLAS.

Well, here comes Chalmers; he was with him too;
Consult his judgment, as you question mine.

Enter CHALMERS.

MORTON.

You come from Ruthven, Chalmers; is it life,
Or death, with him?

CHALMERS.

While there's a spark of life,
I'll not despair;—besides, he mends.

MORTON.

Hear that
From an old soldier: One who has seen death
Do many a hard day's work!

DOUGLAS.

And so have I
Seen death, without the sexton at his heels,
In many a battle :—though my years are few,
They fell on a good fighting time, thank fortune!

MORTON.

Still you must grant us Chalmers' right to judge
As well as your's; and ours to judge between you.
But, to cut short all difference, I 'll go
Myself. As you say, Ruthven's tongue alone
Can plead the cause of Murray; and his cause
Is our's, and Scotland's.—If I find a stir
Of life-blood in his pulse, I 'll raise it to
A throb shall beat with passion.

DOUGLAS.

Then you 'll work
A miracle!

MORTON.

I'll wake him from the sleep
Of death itself, to plead his country's cause.

DOUGLAS.

We 'll see you to the gate, and wish you well.

MORTON.

Then let 's not creep, while time is galloping.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in RUTHVEN'S *House.*

RUTHVEN *reclining on a couch,* CATHERINE *standing by him.*

CATHERINE.

My father, are you better now?

RUTHVEN.

Look out
O'er yonder hill, where winter, breaking up
His snowy camp, is hastening to be gone.
Such is my state!

CATHERINE.

And yet, that gentle sleep,
From which you've just awakened, gives me hope,
The crisis past, you will be well again.

RUTHVEN.

It may be so; but what have I to wish for
In life?—My country's past a sick man's help,
And past a sane man's hope! 'Tis gone to ruin!
I've nothing left to wish—to care for, now.

CATHERINE.

Am I then nothing to you? O, my Father!—
Let me not lose your love—or, if I must,
Let it be some time hence,—that I may play
The cheat for once, and die before it come.

RUTHVEN.

Talk not of dying—even in fancy talk not.
I may not be a gentle father, Kate,
But I'm a loving one. The bird, that feeds
Her young with her own flesh, is harsh of note,
Compare her with the lark that quits her brood
To sing in upper air—O Kate—you know not,
How dear you are to me.

CATHERINE.

I do—I do,
My father—and I bless you for't! But come—
For now I know you love me, will not leave me,

Nor send me from you,—I may tell you now
The Queen desires my presence at the Court;
'Twas but a moment since, her mission reached me.

RUTHVEN.

It must not be:—I cannot spare you, Kate:
I cannot part with you. She has her friends
From every region of the quartered globe:—
Let that content her. But, of this same Court
You spoke of, prythee tell me what in all
Its rare attractions pleased your fancy most,
When you were there? The ball! the tournament!

CATHERINE.

Of all I saw or heard, the Signor's music
Was that which won my heart.

RUTHVEN.

Indeed!

CATHERINE.

Oh, had you heard him too!
You would have said, he was of Orpheus sprung,
Or taught his art by syrens, or had traced
The mermaid's plaint at sea, and caught it on
His harp from the wild wave—or, bolder still,
Had mounted to the spheric harmonies,
And, where the rolling planets hymn to Heaven,
Touched the wrapt choir.

RUTHVEN.

Give o'er this ill-judged praise;
It sounds unseemly from a maiden's lips.
Mark me. I hate that Rizzio from my soul.
I hate him for his country; his religion:
He 's a magician too, and practises
Upon the Queen with spells. Imp of the devil!

He plays the part of Belzebub in Scotland,
And sells us all to Rome. Beware of him!

[*A knocking at the door.*

How now! more visitors?—Who is 't that knocks?

MORTON (*without*).

Commend me to Lord Ruthven.

Enter Servant.

CATHERINE.

'Tis your friend's
The Earl of Morton's voice.

RUTHVEN.

I 'll see the Earl. [*Exit Servant.*
Leave me, my child: I 'll call you soon again;
My heart will miss you.

CATHERINE.

O my dear, dear father!
'Tis joy to see you thus revived. [*Exit.*

RUTHVEN.

Revived!
Disease hath worn me from a giant's bulk
To an anatomy; melted my flesh,
Like wax away at the slow fire of pain;
And that incurable malady, old age,
Sits on my heart, and sinks me to the grave.
Ha! Morton, welcome!

Enter MORTON.

MORTON.

How is 't with my friend?

RUTHVEN.

He lives.

MORTON.

Improves, too. Hope 's a good physician;
If art should fail, there 's strength in nature still.

RUTHVEN.

Yes; when the limbs are young, the sinews free,
The very bones elastic; but, in age,
Weak, withered, and though bent, unbending age,
The healing office of the blood is o'er,
And nature's self is on the side of waste
And dissolution.

MORTON.

Talk not so, nor think so;
Remember what you have been.

RUTHVEN.

That 's my torment:
For now what am I, grovelling in the dust
Even of mine own decay? My sword is bent,
My helmet rusted, and the standard brave
That, like a skirt of Mars, shook overhead,
In the high wind of battle, clings with mould.
I have no strength: what can the dying do,
But, in the base gradation of their fate,
Become the dead, and rot?

MORTON.

'Tis on record
That Cæsar was addict to faintings, fits,
When he made Rome his footstool:—But remember,
His strength was in himself:—his weakness was
A thing of earth:—he spurned it as an alien,
And, standing on the summit of the Age,
Looked down upon infirmity!
Ruthven! the nobles of this once proud realm,
Abandoned by the King, detested by
The Queen, opposed by fortune, and forsaken—
I grieve to say it—by the people's love,
Which lives not longer than prosperity—

Look to you as their leader! If you spurn 'em
There is no single chance for Scotland, but
Submit to Rizzio's yoke!

RUTHVEN.

Fate strike the land
With famine first, or with the spotted plague!
Rizzio's! to Rizzio's yoke! you should not talk
Of Mountebanks, as you would talk of Kings;
Nor mix the lofty crime of power's abuse
With rascal vices, such as crawl about
The heart of such a wretch as Rizzio!

MORTON.

I speak my fear.

RUTHVEN.

Then cease to fear, and speak
More like yourself.

MORTON.

The fire of that rebuke
Shows Ruthven still alive: I will have hope
For Scotland now.

RUTHVEN.

Whatever I can do
To roll back ruin from my native rocks
Into the sea, I will adventure with you.
We must not be the slaves of sycophants,
Nor crouch to fiddling tyrants, while we have
A spot of ground to stand on, or lie under.
From this time forth I 'm one of you again.

MORTON.

I thought it would be so: I said it would.
Ruthven, your hand: I thank you for our country—
But to the end in view. There are petitions
From Edinburgh—from Dumfries, Perth, and Glasgow —

Praying for Murray's pardon and recall:
If, when your health allow, you would present,
And by your speech enforce their argument——

RUTHVEN.

Nay, 'tis not that alone can save the state.
Rizzio must be got rid of—Does the Queen
Distinguish him, as she was wont to do
Before her marriage?

MORTON.

More so still, her bounty
Heaps riches, favours on him.

RUTHVEN.

Then 'tis plain
We must be rid of him—I see the way.
We must search out the guilty secrets of
This court, and bare them to the public gaze—
The hidden story of the Bayonne league
Must be unravelled; and whatever tends
To set the King and Queen at variance nursed,
And cherished into life.

MORTON.

'Twere well to do 't—
But how is 't to be done?

RUTHVEN.

As every thing
That 's great and difficult, is done by patient
And persevering toil. You 've seen a pebble
Washed whiter than the fleeces round the moon,
And made a thing of cost and ornament,
By the untiring wave. There 's a deep moral
In that small truth: the wave, the ceaseless wave,
Hints to the mind the secret of its energy.

MORTON.

We look to you, my friend, for help and counsel.

RUTHVEN.

Morton, those same petitions, that you spoke of—
Are they yet come?

MORTON.

By this time some of them
Must have arrived—I'll go and see to 't, quickly.

RUTHVEN.

What is 't o'clock?

MORTON.

The last that struck was four.

RUTHVEN.

That 's late i' the day;—yet, without further pause,
See there be sent a trusty messenger
To Holyrood. Let him entreat o' the Queen
A private audience for an ailing man.
I 'll make the prayer of those petitioners
Speak out.

MORTON.

So soon, my Lord?

RUTHVEN.

It cannot be
Too soon. Is not our country sinking—gasping?
When Ruin's ireful tooth is in the flesh,
An instant is an age. But go—I have
Another scheme to manage in your absence:
It flashed across my mind, while we were speaking.

MORTON.

This is indeed a happiness: 'twill cheer
Our drooping friends.

RUTHVEN.

Let them be comforted.
Farewell,—no words—they fill the place of action.

[*Exit* MORTON.

Enter CATHERINE.

Now, Kate! come hither, Kate! and hear good news.
Heaven and the lively peril of the times
Have righted me.—Your father lives again.

CATHERINE.

O, not with words, but in my silent heart,
I thank the Heavens for this.

RUTHVEN.

And thank them too
For other joys, than old men's lives can give.
You must to Court, my girl.

CATHERINE.

To Court!—I thought
'Twas not your wish.

RUTHVEN.

But now, my mind is changed.

CATHERINE.

Yet why dismiss me from my duties here
So suddenly?—'Tis true, your health revives:
But in a little time 'twill more revive,
And I be happier, without the fears
That now would haunt me—I should dream of you,
And see you on your sick bed languishing,
And I not near to chafe your aching brow,
Or kiss your burning hand.—Let me not leave you!

RUTHVEN.

Come, come, shake off this weakness: get you ready.
A maid like you should learn to look abroad—
And where the great are found, be found amongst 'em—
Besides, I have my motives—what they are
You need not now be told: But go, and henceforth
Consider Holyrood your home.

CATHERINE.

Oh, no—
My home is with my father.

RUTHVEN.

So it is.
Here, in his heart, where you and life are one.
But there are claims affection's self must yield to.
Mark—as you love your country, and the order
Of nobles in whose station you were born,
And the religion in whose path you walk:
In short, as you love all that should be loved,
And in that all include myself, your father,
'Tis fitting you should lend a helping hand
To those great interests.

CATHERINE.

What can I do,
A trembling maid, incapable and weak,
To serve such interests?

RUTHVEN.

Have you not eyes
And ears, to see and hear? Observe what passes
At Court. Observe the Queen and Rizzio.

CATHERINE.

Ha!
Am I to act the spy?

RUTHVEN.

By Heaven, you drive
My temper past the stretch of patience!—Spy!—
The word was coined to frighten fools from truth.

CATHERINE.

But is't an office that becomes your daughter?

RUTHVEN.

To save a nation, we must not be nice

About the means.—If men will sacrifice
Themselves, their wives, and children, to deserve
The name of patriot, 'tis a proof that rules
Of common life are abrogate, and void,
In this o'erwhelming claim. Go, do as I
Command you.

CATHERINE.

Sir, you are
My father: I must needs obey your mandate.

RUTHVEN.

Now that 's well said; 'tis like my gentle Kate,
My own obedient Kate. But you look pale.
I cannot bear such looks from you, my child;
'Tis not what death can bring to me, but what
It may take from me, fills my soul with fear.
Look better, Kate.

CATHERINE.

I will in time, my father.

RUTHVEN.

I hope you will!—In very selfishness
I hope you will—or I shall soon be nothing.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Holyrood House. An Open Court.

Suitors waiting before the door.

Enter GEORGE DOUGLAS *and* CHALMERS.

CHALMERS.

You 're an unwilling visitor to Court?

DOUGLAS.

Unwilling and unwelcome. I hate Rizzio;
And he returns it. Once he sneered at me
Because I did not walk into the world
Through the church door. He should have paid his life for 't,
But that Lord Morton struck my blade aside,
And saved his fiddle-strings.

CHALMERS.

'Twas not fair play.
But who are these?

DOUGLAS.

All suitors, as I guess;
Come, like ourselves, to swell the great man's levée.

Enter GARCIA, *with Papers, &c. The Suitors crowd round him.*

First Suitor.

Is Signor David,—is the Secretary
At leisure?

GARCIA.

He will pass anon this way.

First Suitor.

I come to beg his interest with the Queen.

GARCIA.

He 'll give you audience in the proper course. [*Exit.*

DOUGLAS.

Mark you that lofty phrase—" He 'll give you audience!"
He 'll condescend his ear.—It makes one's blood boil.

CHALMERS.

Keep down your choler, if you 'd speak him fair.
Look how they crowd, and cringe, and crawl to him.

Enter RIZZIO, *with Letters.*

First Suitor.

Good Signor!

Second Suitor.

Signor David!

Third Suitor.

Signor Rizzio!

Second Suitor.

Most honorable Secretary!

CHALMERS.

Soh!
They 'll make a king of him at last.

DOUGLAS.

He 's that
Already, if, to wield the functions, be
To be a king.

RIZZIO.

I cannot hear you now.

First Suitor.

But one word, Signor; I have a brave son,
Who deems it misery to be unknown:
A word from you would lift him to distinction.

Second Suitor.

I have a brother, who, in fighting fields,
Hath won his way through danger to neglect:
A helping hand from you would make his fortune.

RIZZIO.

We 'll talk of this another time—not now;
For I am pressed by matters of deep moment.
Your cause shall fare no worse for your consenting.

First Suitor.

We will not trespass further, noble Signor.

[*Exeunt Suitors, bowing.*

DOUGLAS.

They say the Devil has his worshippers,
And I believe it.—Sir, a word with you. [*Coming down.*

RIZZIO.

Ha! gentlemen! I pray you pardon me—
I saw you not before.

DOUGLAS.

We know what 'tis
To wait, Sir.

RIZZIO.

But you should not practise it,
If I had seen you. Is there any thing,
So poor a man can do to serve you, Sirs?

DOUGLAS.

Nothing. Our suit is to Her Majesty—
And from the Lords of Morton and of Ruthven.

RIZZIO.

I thought Lord Ruthven was abed, and ill?

DOUGLAS.

But there are two ways out of sickness;—one
Is death: the other is recovery:
He chose the latter.

RIZZIO.

And a prudent choice.
But what has he? what can he have to ask
Of the Queen's favour?

CHALMERS.

To be honoured with
A private audience, that he may deliver,
With his own hand, petitions from the people.

RIZZIO.

You know, the Secretary should present
Such documents.

CHALMERS.

But then, a Lord, methinks
May claim some relaxation of the rule.

RIZZIO.

A friendly Lord.

DOUGLAS.

And who says Ruthven's not so?

RIZZIO.

Sir, 'tis enough, the Queen will listen to
Lord Morton; but I cannot answer for
The other Lord.

DOUGLAS.

Then, why presume for either?

RIZZIO.

Presume?

DOUGLAS.

Ha! Does the word offend your Highness?

RIZZIO.

It is not gracious, Sir, to taunt me thus,
When I bespeak you fairly. What I said
Was in obedience, not in pride: I dare not
Mention Lord Ruthven to the Queen.

DOUGLAS.

And why?
Because an insect buzzing round her ear
Hath trickled poison in 't. Why, 'twas but now,
Not weeks, nor days, but some few hours ago,
The Queen received his daughter as a friend:
Is 't possible she can account the father
An enemy?

RIZZIO.

'Tis not for me to say;
But what my orders are I must abide by.

DOUGLAS.

This comes of harbouring knaves and sycophants.

CHALMERS.

Douglas, be patient.

RIZZIO.

Let him rail, good Sir:
My duty to the Queen forbids retort;
And so I take my leave, to spare disturbance. [*Exit.*

CHALMERS.

We 've lost our suit.

DOUGLAS.

'Tis all the better: Ruthven
Will urge the strong petitions still more strongly
Before the open Court.— Let 's hasten to him. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A State Apartment in Holyrood House.

QUEEN, COUNTESS OF ARGYLE, MARGUERITE, *and* CELINE.

Ladies discovered laughing. CATHERINE *apart.*

QUEEN.

Hark'ye, Argyle! Is't fitting they should laugh thus;
Talk thus, and bear thus hard upon our cousin
Of England? She's a maiden Queen, you know!

MARGUERITE.

She's an old witch.

CELINE.

A red haired witch.

MARGUERITE.

A grey one.

ARGYLE.

Both red and grey; a sweet variety.

MARGUERITE.

'Tis said, her heart hath felt the power of love.

CELINE.

And welcomed it, or fame has much belied her.

QUEEN.

O slanderers! Why! a Queen fares with your tongues
No better than a chambermaid. But where's
Our Secretary, Rizzio?

CELINE.

The last time
I saw the Signor, he was on his knees
Before the picture of your Majesty
That hangs i' th' Hall. Thinking himself alone,
He poured forth such sweet raptures to the picture,

That if 'twere any thing but oil and canvas,
'Twould have walked down to him.

QUEEN.

Yes, if it had
Your love of flattery.

Enter RIZZIO *with papers.*

But here he is;
Now, Signor, what are these?

RIZZIO.

Letters, so please
Your Majesty.

QUEEN.

Come they from France?

RIZZIO.

From France,
And England too. [*Giving letters.*

QUEEN.

And what has England now to say to us?

RIZZIO.

Some new remonstrance touching your late marriage.

QUEEN.

Let her remonstrate with her looking-glass
Against her small grey eyes, and freckled face. [*Reads.*
Ha! look you here! She calls my lord and husband
The King, her servant! What! are Kings and Queens
But vassals to this haughty woman's pride? [*Flourish.*

RIZZIO.

Madam, the King, the Ambassador of England,
And all your Court approach.

QUEEN.

I 'm glad to see
The Ambassador, that he may know my mind.

Enter the KING, *Court*, AMBASSADOR, BOTHWELL, *&c.*
KING *and* QUEEN *sit.*

So, Sir! your Queen would queen it every where;
Aye, even in Scotland, as this protest shews,
And her known succour to the traitor, Murray.

AMBASSADOR.

Beseech you, Madam, to think lightly of it:
The marriage o'er what can protesting signify?

QUEEN.

'Tis strange, methinks, she has not yet protested
Against the unlicensed rising of the sun;
The flowing of the tides; the mad career
Of winds, and other insubordinate acts
Which unsubmissive nature practises!
Yet, let her look to her own crown, or rather
To that she calls her own; and say, if right
Were done between us, who should reign in England?

AMBASSADOR.

I dare not, Madam, for the love I bear
Your Majesty, report so rash a speech
To England's Court—the answer would be war.

BOTHWELL.

Well, Sir, suppose it war!

RIZZIO.

My Lord, forbear—
War should be met, as wise men meet misfortune,
With manly temper, not with levity:
A demon's breath alone should fan the flame.

QUEEN.

Rizzio advises rightly.
Sir Nicholas, inform the Queen, your mistress,
That, of our own free will and royal power,

We 've ta'en the Earl of Darnley to our throne.
'Tis done; and that 's our answer.

AMBASSADOR.

Gracious Madam!
I will repeat your answer faithfully. [*Exit with suite.*

DARNLEY (*descending from the throne*).

What! no appeal to me! to none but Rizzio!
They rule the land between 'em: let 'em rule it. [*aside.*

QUEEN (*descending from the throne.*)

You 've heard, my Lords, the insolence of England.
'Twere well her pride stopped here—but we have learnt,
By sure advices, she gives succour and
Protection to our enemies. There 's Murray:
You know what I have done and suffered for him.
His titles and estates were all the gift
Of this fool hand; yet now he turns upon it!
Elizabeth abets his hostile purpose;
Nay, more, supplies him with the means of our
Annoyance—is this well?

RIZZIO.

'Twill come at last
To blows with England's Queen.

QUEEN.

I seek it not.
But, if 'tis forced upon me, let it come.

DARNLEY.

She 's all the sovereign;—no appeal to me!
But what am I?—She has her councillor. [*aside.*

MELVILLE.

Madam, the King seems moved.

QUEEN.

How now, my Lord!
Has aught displeased you?

DARNLEY.

No; 'tis nothing—but
The vision of the matrimonial crown
Will sometimes cross my thought.

QUEEN.

Remember, Sir,
You are a King.

DARNLEY.

Yes, yes, you call me King,
As slaves are called by mighty Cæsar's name,
To mock their wretchedness more bitterly:
I thank you for the boon.

QUEEN.

O! Darnley, Darnley!
Have I not done enough in doing all? [*A Page enters.*

PAGE.

Madam; the Lords of Ruthven and of Morton,
Crave, with the younger Douglas, and some others,
Permission to approach your Majesty.

QUEEN.

Admit them; we 've almost forgot their faces.

Enter RUTHVEN, MORTON, DOUGLAS, CHALMERS, MAITLAND, LINDSAY, *and others.*

You 've ta'en us by surprise, my Lord; we thought
Your sickness more acute.

RUTHVEN.

Great Madam, there
Are claims that sickness self must yield to: death
Alone can cancel them. I am deputed
By hundreds—thousands—of your Majesty's
Most loyal subjects, to lay at your feet
These, their petitions.

QUEEN.

What 's the prayer they urge?

RUTHVEN.

In chief, the pardon of the Earl of Murray.

QUEEN.

Hear this, my Lords: his pardon! Murray's! that —
What shall I call him?

RUTHVEN.

Call him what he is—
Your brother, Madam.

QUEEN.

Then, the baser he,
To be my foe.

RUTHVEN.

And the more blessed you,
To be his pardoner.

QUEEN.

His! his! that traitor's!
Never—so help me heaven, and as I hope,
Myself, for mercy!

RUTHVEN.

Ha! mark that! you hope it;
O! give it to that hope. You cannot tear—
Tear, with your delicate hand, the bonds that nature
Tied with her own:—you cannot put to death
Affection in your living bosom:—no!—
Pride, passion, or some bitter ecstacy
May, for a moment, hide it from yourself,
But there it is, mixed in the blood that sweeps
The circle of your being, to revive
Again, when the rash fit has spent its rage,
And mercy claims her sway.

QUEEN.

Should mercy shut
Her eyes to guilt?

RUTHVEN.

No; but with open eyes
Should pardon it: for what is mercy? Is 't not
Forgiveness? And what is forgiveness, but
Remission of the penalty of crime?
If we must keep our mercy for the guiltless,
We might as well give alms to rich abundance,
Fire to the tropic's arid bosom, frost
To the baked pole, and raindrops to the deep!
The fault you hint at is in mercy's self,
That spreads her wing above the head of guilt,
And saves it for repentance.

QUEEN.

Say no more.

BOTHWELL.

Ruthven knows well that Murray still persists
In plotting for the ruin of his country.

RUTHVEN.

Ha! Bothwell, is that you? I thought so! You
Know where to plant the foot, when a man 's down;—
And Murray 's down.

BOTHWELL.

And you know how to take
The part of Rebels.

RUTHVEN.

Not, when you were one.

DARNLEY.

But is 't not true, what Bothwell says of Murray?
Has he not sworn it?

RUTHVEN.

O! when Bothwell swears,

I know what side the truth 's on.

BOTHWELL.

Sneering villain! [*touching his sword.*

RUTHVEN.

Psha! Take your hand from off that heated steel—
'Twill burn your fingers else.

BOTHWELL.

You need not fear—
I thirst not for your blood.

RUTHVEN.

I know not that;
But this I know—my blood, Sir, hath its price;
And he must be no niggard of his own,
Who takes it at the cost 'twill put him to.

RIZZIO.

My Lords, is this a tone for the Queen's presence?

RUTHVEN.

What crawling thing is that, whose hiss I hear?

DOUGLAS.

'Tis Rizzio!—David Rizzio!

RUTHVEN.

He, who plays
The lute, and sings! Back, minion, to your place!
Your office is to whisper, Sir; to whisper—
Not to speak out like a man; for that were e'en
As if a mole should strive to scale the wall,
Instead of undermining it. Look to
Your occupation;—'twill be better for you—
Neglecting it, you 'll lose your way, and fall
Wretchedly into mischief.

RIZZIO.

Still I say
You ought not to forget, Her Majesty,
The Queen is here.

RUTHVEN.

So is the King here too !—
And asks no upstart to assume his power.

DARNLEY.

'Tis true, that Rizzio takes too much upon him—

QUEEN.

He takes my part. Is that a fault ? to take
His mistress' part against that scornful man ?

RUTHVEN.

I do beseech you, Madam, pardon me—
I bend with reverence to the throne and you—
But, when I'm barked at by so many curs,
Passion will leap the bounds of ceremony,
And anger bite its cords :—forgive me, Madam.

QUEEN.

Pass to the next Petition.

RUTHVEN.

There is yet
Another prayer in this—it humbly begs
For the dismissal of the foreigners.

QUEEN.

What have they done ?

RUTHVEN.

No matter—they are foreign.
Our ancestors were wont to hate that name—
And their example still should govern us.

QUEEN.

But they're all dead. You would not have the dead
Govern the living !—If the dead could peep
Out of their graves, they would not know this world
To be the world they used to tread upon ;—
Why should they rule it then ? Death knows no change ;

But life is full of changes, like the sky
With many weathers; and our planet rolls
Amongst a thousand scattered influences
All turning upon change.

RIZZIO.

Lord Ruthven speaks
As if he 'd stamp upon the rolling earth
And cry out—"stop!" to the spheres.

DOUGLAS.

Peace! Dastard, peace!
My Lord! he sees your health has suffered lately!—
That gives him courage.

RUTHVEN.

Be 't so, 'tis his instinct.
The cur will bark to see the lion fall.

RIZZIO.

'Tis possible, you may o'er-rate your lion,
And under-rate your cur. I 've known such slips—
But why denounce me? 'Sdeath, I 'm not a worm—
A thing without a name, save the vile sound
That covers all the species ignominiously;—
I have a man's heart beating in my breast,
And a man's arm to guard it.

DARNLEY.

Madam, are
The nobles to be taunted by your minion?

QUEEN.

If nobles will begin the strife of words,
I cannot regulate its course to please them—
My business in this audience is to listen!
But those who break down fences should not murmur
That the way 's clear for others as for them.

DARNLEY.

I thought you 'd take this course to succour him.

QUEEN.

Indeed, Sir! As for these petitioners,
Your clients, my Lord Ruthven, let them know
That we will duly weigh their least requests,
And to our best of judgment, deal with 'em.
Rizzio, attend us—we shall need your skill
In harmony to drown the discords here.

[*Flourish.* *Exit* QUEEN, *followed by* RIZZIO, *&c.*

DARNLEY.

Ruthven?

RUTHVEN.

You called me?

DARNLEY.

Yes! I 'd speak with you.

[RUTHVEN *dismisses* DOUGLAS.

O Ruthven, be my friend, for I have need.

RUTHVEN.

I am your friend—what can I do to serve you?

DARNLEY.

How should the wronged be served, but by revenge?
Is every woman, think you, music's slave?

RUTHVEN.

There was a Queen of Egypt once—I mean
The jilt that made a fool of Antony—
And she loved music too! We know the dance
She led her dupe.—By heaven! I 'd rather die
Of Egypt's plague than trust its Cleopatras!

DARNLEY.

You 'd say that I 'm deceived, disgraced, dishonoured.

RUTHVEN.

Do you suspect them, then?

DARNLEY.

Suspect!—By heaven
You 've almost stopped my breath with a word! You dropped
Some hints of this before, and so did Morton;—
Hints that have scorched me with the penal fire
Of this world's hell; and yet the miscreant lives!
Will no one rid me of that David?

RUTHVEN.

Hush! Keep back your vengeance 'till we 've further proof.

DARNLEY.

You talk of vengeance, as if 'twere an art
Men learnt at school, and not a rooted instinct.

RUTHVEN.

I talk of vengeance, as an act of reason.
Why does the lightning's flash so seldom kill,
While the poised engine of inferior fire
Counts every round to death? Because the one
Bursts from the bosom of the thunder cloud,
And one is thought—directed. Leave revenge
To time and me: 'twill not be lost between us.

Enter DOUGLAS.

But look! George Douglas comes again! How now?

DOUGLAS.

The Commons are assembled to discuss
The subject of the matrimonial crown.
I thought it right to warn you.

DARNLEY.

There again
My wrongs cry out. The Queen declines to use,
Without their sanction, her prerogative.

RUTHVEN.

I'll try what may be done to win their favour.
Come, Douglas: as we go, I've something for
Your private ear, to help the working of
Our plans. Farewell, Sir: when we meet again,
I hope to bring the Crown along with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Gallery.

The QUEEN, *Countess of* ARGYLE, CATHERINE, CELINE, MARGUERITE, *and Ladies, &c. discovered.*

RIZZIO *at the Harp. Music.*

ARGYLE.

Would you not augur, from his bended brow,
Leaning on thought, he loved ambitiously?
And so he does; but mark him, when he strikes
The magic string, and lifts his eyes to Heaven,
As if he looked at inspiration.

CATHERINE.

O there's a melody even in the pause
And stoppage of his song; for fancy fills
The resting place more sweet than others' music
[*Bold Music—Symphony.*

QUEEN.

Hark! hark! the echoes ring. [*Air.*
(*Leaning on* ARGYLE.) Is it the soul
Of genius, or the storm that wakes that note?
Or heaven or earth that tunes it to the swell
Of mighty winds and tempests? Hark, again
The minstrel hangs his head in melancholy— [*soft music.*

And now the zephyrs steal among the strings
To touch his hand and die.—It was not falsehood
That bade the poet fancy stones to move;
For there 's a spirit in creation,
A mind in matter, captivate to song:—
The very comet, in his random sphere,
Obeys its voice, and smooths his bristling fires,
To listen while the golden planets sing;—
The smallest clod of earth does, in its fair
Proportion to the wheeling worlds above,
Sustain the universal harmony,
And follow nature in her heavenly round!
'Twas therefore truth, not falsehood, told how trees
And stones could move, when music tried her skill;
And thus the poet's thought is justified!

CELINE.

" Nay I 'll appeal at once to our good Queen [*to* CATHERINE.
" For her decision—Please your Majesty,
" The Lady Catherine will contend with us
" That Scotland boasts a brighter sun than France.

MARGUERITE.

" Why, now in truth does the sun ever shine on 't?

CATHERINE.

" Ay, sweeter than on any other shore,
" The wind may blow on Scotland harshly, yet
" Its breath is healthful, and at winter's worst
" Endurable, and when the summer comes,
" 'Tis not a demon from the burning zone
" That fires our climate, but a genial power,
" The sister of the spring illumines it.
" O! how the hills and valleys welcome her!
" The poorest weed that grows attempts a flower
" To cast it at her feet.

QUEEN.

" Well spoken, dear
" Enthusiast, lover of thy native land."
But this is too akin to gravity,
And we 've enow of that when business calls us.
Come, what device? We 've no sour faces here,
To make their sourer comments on our mirth;
So we 'll enact the matter of a play,
In our court fashion—ha! ha! when the Signor wakes
Out of his sleep. [*Pointing to* RIZZIO, *who is wrapt in thought.*

RIZZIO.

Forgive an absent mind,—
And yet not absent neither; for my dream
Was e'en where all my thoughts are.

All.

But the play!
Let 's have the play!

QUEEN.

I 'll take the heroine's part;
And, Rizzio, you shall thunder in the hero.

CATHERINE.

Good Heaven! Has madness slipped its chain to make
A show of Scotland's throne? [*Aside.*

QUEEN.

Now for the cue. [*Goes to* RIZZIO.
Suppose yourself some troubadour of old,
And me the lady of your love.—Call down
The muse from Heaven to lend her burning tongue,
That you may speak in fire:—there is my hand.
Begin your speech with wax or alabaster.

RIZZIO.

What say you to the snow so white, so pure—
So like the mind that prompts this beauteous hand

To every gracious act ? Oh, Mary ! Queen !
The tongue that trembles to pronounce thy name,
Can ill perform thy praise, unequalled fair,
Surpassing all that ever fable told
Of loveliness. [*Kneeling, he is about to rise.*

QUEEN.

Good minstrel, ere you rise,
Wear this in token of your Queen's regard :
Around thy neck I twine the ribbon's coil,
An emblem of the love that merit wins :
And, pendent at thine heart, my likeness place
To last —— [*Hanging a portrait round his neck.*

RIZZIO.

Till death; for death shall find it there.

QUEEN.

Now, friends, your judgment on this moving scene—
Which is the better actor—he, or I ?

CELINE.

The Queen, who still is best in every thing,
Is best in this.

QUEEN.

Go to ! You flatter me.
What says our thoughtful friend ?

CATHERINE.

If acting be
The best that is the most unlike pretence,
I vote the Signor first ; tho' both were better
Than either ought to be.

QUEEN.

Tis well defined.
'You 're a just judge, and I confirm your judgment.
But, Rizzio, we must mend our ways, and turn

Worse actors to be more approved of. Come,
The play is ended, and the banquet waits,
And welcome is already at the door,
Impatient for your salutation. [*Exeunt all but* RIZZIO.

RIZZIO.

Oh! that I were a troubadour indeed,
And thou my lady love! too charming Queen!
I do remember, when I saw her first,
She deigned to notice and to honour me;
I kissed her white hand, as the votary kisses
The waxen image of his patron saint,
And then began the dream that ends in madness!
Come, then, thou bright perdition of the mind;
Thou bane of manly thought, and enterprise;
But dearer than their fame, whate'er thou art,
That in mysterious thraldom hold my soul;
I 'm thine, and though destruction yawn, I clasp thee!—
Garcia! how now?—Whence come you?

Enter GARCIA.

GARCIA.

From your friends,
Who suffer much indignity, because
Of your high bearing to the nobles. They—
Your friends, I mean—are discontent at this.

RIZZIO.

Indeed! Then is
Your mission to advise me how to crawl?
I 've had some stern instructors in that lesson.

GARCIA.

You feel too deeply these indignities.

RIZZIO.

Tis not so easy, as your thoughts may tell you,

To bear insulting pride. You 'll say, despise it:
But there 's a sting—a galling sting in scorn
That finds the weaker part of nature out,
And flings the nobler moral to the wind—
Wouldst have me thank contempt?

GARCIA.

I 'd teach you patience.

RIZZIO.

Observe how darkly Douglas scowls upon us.
But patience is a virtue—you shall see
That I can practise it.

Enter DOUGLAS *and* CHALMERS.

DOUGLAS.

Is there no corner
Free from these foreign reptiles?

RIZZIO.

Come: he 's in
A mood to quarrel now. We have no chance
But instant flight. [*With affected humility to* GARCIA.
There 's no way else to save us.

GARCIA.

I hope there 's some salvation in our own
Right hands, if we 're put to 't.

RIZZIO.

No, that would be
High bearing, and I 'm convert to the low. [*With a sneer.*

CHALMERS.

They speak of us.

DOUGLAS.

Ay, let them.—Rizzio, I
Owe you a favour for my mother's sake.
You chafed her memory once, and, like a dog,
Barked at her grave.

RIZZIO.

'Twas in my passion, Sir,
A passion you provoked by fouler language.
But as it is, I'm sorry for it—Forget it.

DOUGLAS.

Your sorrow is a cheat,—a coward's falsehood!

GARCIA.

Falsehood! Did you hear that? Coward and false!
Is your hand palsied?—If you dare not use it,
[*to* RIZZIO, *in great agitation.*
Give me the sword. [*offering to take his sword.*

RIZZIO.

Hold off! my sword's my own.
You see I can forbear;—remember that,
And so report it. As for this small man [*pointing to* DOUGLAS.
With the great voice, I have no fear of him;
He thunders, but not lightens,—harmless noise.

DOUGLAS.

Find me an equal who will tell me so,
And mark how soon my sword ——

RIZZIO.

What could it do?
An ungrown boy would whip you through the ribs
While you were looking for your courage to
Persuade it from the scabbard!

DOUGLAS.

Foreign slave!
Again thou ly'st.

RIZZIO.

Take back the lie thrice-charged.
For thee—thy very name's a lie; thy place
Is with the caitiffs, who take pride in shame,
And know not how to feel even for their mothers.

DOUGLAS.

Ha, villain! Draw! Draw—and defend thy life.

RIZZIO.

Blows are the best defence when ruffians brave us. [*they fight.*

DARNLEY, MORTON, *Lords, and Officers, &c. &c. rush in.*

DARNLEY.

Beat down their swords and seize 'em. Now what 's here?
A riot in the palace! Rizzio! You
Shall answer this.

RIZZIO.

And Douglas, Royal Sir,—
He shared the fault, and should the penalty.

DARNLEY.

Bear him to the strong chamber, [*pointing to* RIZZIO.
Till we 've time
To sit in judgment on his great offence.

RIZZIO.

Remember, Sir, I claim—

DARNLEY.

Away with him.

[RIZZIO *is borne off.* *Exeunt all but* DARNLEY.

Now, now he 's in my power and he shall feel it.
Before another night steals on the world
I 'll rid myself of him. But where is Ruthven?
He promised soon to greet me with the news
How the bloat Commons have decided on
My title to the matrimonial Crown.—
Let them beware. Rizzio shall feel my power,
And all who brave my hate, shall taste my vengeance.

[*exit.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter DARNLEY *and* MELVILLE.

DARNLEY *pacing the Apartment.*

DARNLEY.

I must see Ruthven, ere I deal with David.
I must possess the matrimonial Crown,
Ere I can think of aught;—aye, e'en of vengeance.
Look from the casement. Is there no one coming?

MELVILLE.

None, please your Majesty!

DARNLEY.

No Ruthven yet!
Go look again. There 's not a knave amongst 'em
Who brings me news he thinks will gall my pride,
But seems as if it pleased him.

MELVILLE.

Yonder, Sir,
Lord Ruthven comes at last.

DARNLEY.

'Tis well! 'Tis well!
Comes he like one commissioned with a crown?
Where is he?—'Sdeath! how slow the sick man moves:
But may be 'tis th' intelligence he bears
Is not worth moving to communicate.

Hold! Here he comes: begone, and leave us. Now!
Is the Crown mine?

RUTHVEN *enters as the Attendant goes out.*

RUTHVEN.

They have refused it, Sir.

DARNLEY.

Refused! They know my power, and dare they for
Their lives refuse? What reason did they give?
They had some reason, or some pretext which
They called a reason, for adventuring!
What was 't?

RUTHVEN.

Let me entreat your Majesty
To be content with what you 've heard; 't would rouse
Your anger, and distress my tongue, to trace
Their insolent proceeding further.

DARNLEY.

Nay—
Speak, I command you.

RUTHVEN.

As you 'll have it so,
Why so you shall. One of 'em said, the Queen,
When she proclaimed you King, usurp'd a pow'r
Not her's by law. Another charged you with
Truckling to Rizzio, and oppressing him
When you had gained your ends. All were against you.

DARNLEY.

And you heard all, and brought away your sword
Covered up safely in its leathern case!
You should have spurn'd,—denounced their villainy,
Thrust back their foul decision through their teeth.

RUTHVEN.

How, Sir!
I 'm not a bravo, nor a cut-throat, hired
To stop men's mouths with murder when they exercise
A civil right.

DARNLEY.

Ha! traitor!

RUTHVEN.

Traitor!

DARNLEY.

Slave!

RUTHVEN.

King, you 're ungrateful.

DARNLEY.

Dar'st thou tell me so?
Then take thy fate. [*rushes at him with his sword.*

RUTHVEN.

[*striking the sword from his hand.*

Not from a hand like thine.
Go, Sir! Pick up your sword—you 'll find the fragments.

DARNLEY.

[*After a pause of great agitation.*

What have I done? 'Twas madness drove me to
The desperate act.—Oh, Ruthven! Once my friend,
Canst thou forgive?

RUTHVEN.

If I could not forgive,
Where would be Darnley now?

Enter MORTON.

Ha! Morton!—you
Have come in time to reach the King his sword:
But wipe it first;—the blade hath met a stain.

MORTON.

[*Takes up the sword, and presents it to the* KING.

Receive it, Royal Sir. Ruthven, how 's this?
Methinks the ground 's no place for such a weapon.

RUTHVEN.

Then, Morton, take my word, 'tis better there
Than in bad hands that know not how to use it.
But come; what 's past is gone: let 's look before us.
You 've business, may be, to despatch.

MORTON.

I came
To ask the King what shall be done with Rizzio?

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, our quarrel 's healed: you 'll not refuse
To lend your counsel?

RUTHVEN.

Sir, the course is plain.
It needs no counsel. Let him have the form
Of trial: by all means the form: what else
He gets, 'twill be for you to take good care of.

DARNLEY.

I 'll have him brought before me on the instant.
Go, Morton, see it done.

MORTON.

He waits without:
A moment will suffice to bring him here. [*exit.*

RUTHVEN.

It were not wise that we should all assist
In this transaction; therefore I 'll withdraw.
I gave my daughter cause t' expect me soon:
But by the time you 've heard the charge, I will
Return to meet you.

DARNLEY.

Fail not to attend. [*exit* RUTHVEN.
Now for this whipster who reviles my power,
Usurps my place, and makes his fortune by
His impudence! I 'll stop his proud career.

Re-enter MORTON, *followed by* RIZZIO, GARCIA, GEORGE DOUGLAS, CHALMERS, MELVILLE, *&c.*

MORTON.

Stand forward, Rizzio, at the King's command;
And you, George Douglas, the accuser, stand
Opposed to him.

DARNLEY.

(*To* RIZZIO.) Are you prepared to plead
To the offence whereof you are accused?
Or would you, by a free acknowledgment,
Throw yourself on our mercy?

RIZZIO.

Royal Sir,
Most willingly do I confess my fault
So far as I have erred. But if 'tis meant
(As I collect from what has reached mine ear)
To charge me with the onset in th' assault—
That I deny. The man who charges me—
Young Douglas there—he was the first to strike.
'Tis true I struck again, but then my sword
Was less a weapon to me than a shield.

MELVILLE.

Stand back, my Lords; make way there for the Queen.

DARNLEY.

How 's this? The Queen! Madam, I did not look
To meet you here.

Enter QUEEN, *attended by Ladies.*

QUEEN.

No, Sir—we seldom meet;
But, as the fickle will of accident
Has thrown us, by some strange mistake, together,
I hope we shall agree.

DARNLEY.

I hope so, too,
For the crown's honour and its dignity:
I would support it, tho' I wear it not.

QUEEN.

What is the present stage the cause has reach'd?

DARNLEY.

Douglas accuses Rizzio as th' aggressor
In an assault upon his life; and Rizzio
Admits the assault, but not th' aggression, which
He charges upon Douglas.
Our palace was the scene of violence.
Their witnesses are equal, it appears,
In number, but if rank should turn the scale ——

RIZZIO.

Oh, Madam! Pause before you so determine:
Pause, and consider well. Truth has no rule
Of rank: 'twas made for all mankind; and must
Be sought for in th' essential part of man,
The mind, that is the man.

DOUGLAS.

'Tis ever thus
He talks of station with contempt;—there 's scarce
A lord in Scotland but has felt his tongue.

RIZZIO.

Say rather there are few but with their tongues

Have injured me. They treat me like a slave;
They call me base musician, mountebank;
They elbow me in court, frown on me in
The streets: they set their menials to insult me.
Oh, 'tis fine pastime for the lordly pack
To tear a poor man's self-respect to pieces!
Then, if I call 'em to account, they jeer
And laugh—that laugh is worse than death to me.

DOUGLAS.

Hark, how he rails against the nobly born!

RIZZIO.

I do not rail against the nobly born
When merit stamps their claim.—I honour worth;
And rank—for aught I know, who cannot boast it—
May help the good that nature must begin.
But, when I see hard hearted pride rejoicing
To crush the weak, by Heaven! it drives me mad
To think that one man should be born for power,
And t' other for oppression.

DARNLEY.

Will you hear
This insolence?

QUEEN.

Not if I thought it such.

DARNLEY.

Then let 's decide the cause, and stop the pleading.

QUEEN.

We have no clue to guide us through the maze
Of contrariety.

DARNLEY.

But we can judge
Between the credit due to men of worth
And men of yesterday?

DOUGLAS.

It asks no skill
To weigh the credit of a base Italian.

RIZZIO.

But, wherefore base?—Explain. Was Rome of old
A land of baseness? Were her patriots base?
Were the great Cæsars knaves? and Cicero!
Was he a cheat, and Horace a buffoon?
These were your base Italians!

DOUGLAS.

Nay, you speak
From books—I spoke of living men.

RIZZIO.

And I
Of men who live for ever! Men, whose names
Were, like their souls, immortal!— men who stood
Upon the mountain top of the whole world,
The very Ida of the intellect!
But, look again—I take a later day,
When Italy and base Italians saved
The wreck of learning, and the fountain springs
Of liberty and glory from the Goth.
What can you shew to match that matchless claim?—
The glorious East, that in its bosom wears
The morning, like a jewel, never shone
So bright, as when the gates of Italy
Opened to let the flood of science out
Upon the world, and gilded all the sphere!
You talk of base Italians! Learn to read,
And you 'll talk otherwise.

DARNLEY.

The Queen may choose
To hear this boastful language, but it shall not

Turn us from justice, in whose name and by
The weight and power of whose authority
We banish you from Scotland.

QUEEN.

How! my Lord?

DARNLEY.

Rizzio is banished from this land for ever,
Or I am King no more.

QUEEN.

Oh, be a King!
Put on the real crown, the kingly mind,
And spurn injustice, as the antipathy
Of your proud office, which is outraged by
The very sound o' the name.

DARNLEY.

Ha! would you plead,
Before my face, to save him? Thus it is
Your favour to him makes your name a byword
On every ribbald tongue—'Tis time 'twere changed.

QUEEN.

Is this a horrid dream, or a more horrid
Reality? Am I the Queen of Scots,
Or, as I seem to be, some helpless wretch,
Insulted by some high barbarian?
No, Sir; I 'm still the Queen, and in the name
Of my prerogative, I here reverse
Your sentence, and deliver David Rizzio
From your injustice! Rizzio, you are free;
Free, as the King himself, to live in Scotland!

RIZZIO.

I know not what to say—My brain! my brain!

QUEEN.

Yet hold! There 's yet one chance to save this breach.

[*motions back the Lords.*

Recall the hasty word your passion spoke;
Revoke the sentence by your own decree,
And I, who set the Crown upon your head,
Will make it grow with greatness!

DARNLEY.

'Tis in vain.
I stand upon my right—You talk to marble.

QUEEN.

I talk to coarser and to harder stone,
That never could be hewn into man's image,—
The rock, the impenetrable rock. Farewell!
From this time forth our fates are separate. [*going.*

RIZZIO.

Oh, Madam! Royal Mary! Let me speak
Before you go. And yet, the monstrous charge!
Th' inhuman blasphemy! It shocks my soul
To give it so much entertainment
As to expose it! Sir, you are abused:
Some fiend has whispered in your ear to damn you:
Oh, drive the thought back to the hell it came from.
Look there! look there! even at your Queen and Wife!
Is there no process of conviction quicker
Than lightning strikes, to strike persuasion through you,
Where virtue shines from such a heaven as that,
And makes a doubt a crime?

DARNLEY.

I 'll hear no more.

QUEEN.

'Twere useless now, for now I 've done with you.

[*Exit with Suite.*

DARNLEY.

Why stand you there t' insult me with your presence?

Know you not you are free? Begone! [*to* RIZZIO.
Leave me, my friends. [*Exeunt Conspirators, &c.*

RIZZIO.

Farewell, Sir!
The hour will come you 'll think of this and weep! [*Exit.*

DARNLEY.

The hour is come I 'll think of this and vengeance.
Now, where is Ruthven?

Enter RUTHVEN, *followed by* CATHERINE.

RUTHVEN.

At your bidding, Sir,—
With further proof to satisfy your mind.

DARNLEY.

I need no further proof. The Queen has snatched
Her minion from my gripe!

RUTHVEN.

That 's strong, indeed!
And yet there 's stronger still. 'Twill take you but
A moment's time to hear. Stand forward, Kate.
Look up, and tell the King what you have seen—
For, mark me well! I know what you have seen—
Since you have been at Court.

CATHERINE.

And was 't for this
You brought me here? I 've seen no wrong at Court,
Or, if I did, 'tis not for me to name it.

RUTHVEN.

Shrink not, my child: I do not ask you for
One word beyond the simple facts you 've witnessed;
But justice calls for them.

CATHERINE.

What is 't you mean?

RUTHVEN.

There are but two short questions, and the answers
May be as short. In truth a word 's a volume.
Was there a play performed at Court, in which
The actors were the Queen and Rizzio ?

CATHERINE.

O Heaven ! The Queen 's undone ! [*Aside.*

RUTHVEN.

Speak—was there such a play ?

CATHERINE.

There was—in harmless mirth.

RUTHVEN.

And was her picture, by the Queen's own hand,
Placed round the neck of Rizzio ?

CATHERINE.

'Twas so placed ;
But then ——

RUTHVEN.

No doubt, in harmless mirth again. [*to* DARNLEY.

DARNLEY.

'Tis proof on proof : their guilt 's as clear as day :
So let us make their crime and punishment
A lesson to the world.

CATHERINE.

Oh, Royal Sir,
For mercy's sake impute not guilt to that
Most innocent act ! My father was deceived :
He heard it with a false construction
From spies—from fiends, whose devilish art it is,
When they tell truth, to tell it still untruly.

RUTHVEN.

Why will you harm yourself and vex the King ?

CATHERINE.

I know not why my heart has grown so bold,
But I could speak before th' assembled earth
In such a cause. Hear me, upon my knees.
Remember, King, your Queen is innocent.
By yon bless'd beam of light, still warm from Heav'n,
That beam is not more innocent of darkness
Than she of guilt.

DARNLEY.

Your facts disprove your oath.

CATHERINE.

No, on my life; no, on my soul, they do not!
Try them in righteous scales; dash the false weight
Of preconceived suspicion to the ground;
Allow for human weakness in the judge,
As well as in th' accus'd, and you 'll not find
That facts are traitors to the cause of virtue.

RUTHVEN.

Come, Sir—she wrings my soul.

DARNLEY.

We will not hear her.

CATHERINE.

Justice hears all.

[*Exit* DARNLEY. CATHERINE *seizes* RUTHVEN *as he is following.*

Oh, stay, my father, stay!
Leave me not thus abandoned by the thought
That I have been the cursed cause of mischief
To my kind patroness, the Queen. Speak to me
One gentle word, for I am weak and faint,
And may not long survive to trouble you.

RUTHVEN.

I thought I was all iron, but you 've found

The way to melt the ore. Why do you talk
Of weakness? Is 't to wound your father's heart?

CATHERINE.

O no, no, no! I love that heart too well.

RUTHVEN.

Then give it credit for an honest purpose.
Nay, loose me, for the King expects me now.

[DARNLEY *calls without* "LORD RUTHVEN."

He waits! Let go your hold! I must not stay—
Nay—though it break my heart, I must break from thee.

[*breaks from her, and exit.*

CATHERINE.

What shall I do? I 'll to the Queen at once—
If I can yet persuade her part from Rizzio,
They may be saved; if not, destruction waits 'em! [*exit.*

SCENE II.

A Gallery in the Palace.

Enter QUEEN, *followed by* RIZZIO, *as importuning her. Ladies remain near the door.*

QUEEN.

Rizzio, I tell thee, no! I 'll stake my throne
Upon this issue. Ere he shall prevail
Against me, kingdom, life, and all shall go.

RIZZIO.

'Tis terrible! If ruin came alone,
I could defy; but to pull thee down too!

QUEEN.

If you go now, they 'll say 'twas guilty fear—
The flight of conscious crime. I 'll have my will
Obeyed, and not the King's; my pride demands it.

Therefore, no more of that.—But, tell me, Rizzio,
How is 't that slander has the power to blast
The fairest fame, and virtue none to save it?

RIZZIO.

Alas! 'twas so ordained. A word, a look
Needs nothing but a foul interpreter
To turn its simple language into shame.
And what can virtue do? 'Tis on the rose
The canker feeds; 'tis in the blossom's core
The ugly worm carouses.—Such is slander!

QUEEN.

Oh, Rizzio! 'tis a fearful thing to look
Upon the naked skeleton of life;
'Tis worse than that of death for all its glare.

Enter CATHERINE.

CATHERINE.

Where is the Queen? Let me but see the Queen.

QUEEN.

How! Lady Catherine!

CATHERINE.

Madam! I am come
To warn you. Ha! the Signor, too! [*Seeing* RIZZIO.
Forgive
My boldness—'tis no time to stand on forms
When vengeance is abroad.

QUEEN.

Vengeance!

CATHERINE.

Oh! Madam!
I fear the worst! my father and the King.

QUEEN.

I know their hate, but is a Queen to fear it?

CATHERINE.

'Tis not their hate I'd have you fear, but error
That ruins more than hate. Suspicion has
Possessed them with strange fancies: and what end
May come of it no tongue can tell! O, Signor!
Help me to plead this cause, for you are e'en
The mark of their suspicion:—'tis most true—
Then let me warn you, as my purpose was,
To part for ever.

RIZZIO.

Ha! For ever, say you?
By Heaven, I knew not till I had heard it from
Another's mouth like a death doom announced,
How hard it was to part!

CATHERINE.

Ah! Madam, hear me—You may never hear,
Nor see me more. By nature weak, I feel
My little strength outworn. If, as they say,
[*leans on one of the ladies.*
'Tis sometimes giv'n the dying to foresee;
There is a horror in th' obscure of time
Dependent on this hour's decision! Part!
I speak it from the threshold of the tomb—
Waste not the time in words, or thoughts—but part! [*Exit.*

As CATHERINE *goes off, shouts and sounds of tumult are heard at a distance.*

QUEEN.

What dreadful sounds are these?

RIZZIO.

The whole day long
An angry spirit has displayed itself
Among the populace, and now it seems
To rush with louder fury through the air?

QUEEN.

What is the cause?

RIZZIO.

Their hate of foreigners,
But most of me. I am the cause, and, yet
I have not strength to tear myself away,
And seek oblivion in the death of exile.
Hark! There again! The sound grows louder still!
Is't hope that's coming to an end?

QUEEN.

No, no;
Hope has no end, but, even when life is sped,
Leaps on the shadow of another world
And sweeps through all eternity. [*Enter* CELINE.
How now?

CELINE.

Fly, Madam! Save yourself! A mob is at
The gate, demanding vengeance upon those
Who caused your Majesty to sign the league
Of Bayonne.

RIZZIO.

Traitors! Tyrants! Madam, give
My sword but leave to make this cause its own.

QUEEN.

No, Sir; no foreign swords; 'tis not the way
To quiet Scotsmen. But, if outrage should
Approach us in our palace, you shall guard
Our person and our life.

RIZZIO.

I take the charge;
More proud of it than fields where glory grows
But here's another messenger! What news?

Enter GARCIA.

GARCIA.

The tumult's at its height, and every moment
'Tis feared the troops must fire to save the palace.

QUEEN.

Let all things else be tried first. Hold! I'll go
And shew myself.

RIZZIO.

Stay, Madam,—Think upon
The risk you run.

QUEEN.

This is no time for thought;
And, as for risk, the way to 'scape's to meet it.

[*Exit, followed by* CELINE.

RIZZIO.

By thee I take my stand, upon the line
That life must pay to pass,—my post is there;
And in my heart I've that will make me fatal. [*Exit.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter COUNTESS *of* ARGYLE *and* CELINE.

ARGYLE.

I dare not look again upon the crowd:
Their savage yells, their frightful faces, and
Their rage, appal my soul—Where is the Queen?

CELINE.

I know not, Lady; for the multitude
Within the palace cramm'd the avenues,
And, in their eagerness to aid the Queen,
Soon severed her from her attendants.

ARGYLE.

'Twas so I lost her too. But is there no one
Can tell us of her fate?

CELINE.

Here comes the Signor:—
He knows, if any know, where we shall find
Our Royal Mistress.

Enter RIZZIO.

RIZZIO.

'Twas but now I left
The Queen, to learn some tidings of the fray,
Which happily is ended, but I know not,
Where, in my absence, she withdrew,

ARGYLE.

Then, is the danger past?

RIZZIO.

You hear the shouts no more.

ARGYLE.

No; all is silent;—Was 't the Queen controul'd
The riot? or her friends?

RIZZIO.

Neither. Before
She reach'd the balcony, Ruthven was up,
And with a bold harangue outbade the storm.

CELINE.

Thank Heav'n for this good news!

ARGYLE.

Amen. It may be
She 's in the chamber now:—let 's seek her there,
And be the Messengers of Peace to cheer her.

[*Exeunt* ARGYLE *and* CELINE.

RIZZIO.

All 's over now with me: yes—I must fly
From hence to save the Queen; this tumult proves it.
"But how will foul-mouthed Rumour scan the act;
"And what will future story say of it?"
'Twas but the other day I met a Beldam,
Who fix'd her time-defying eyes upon me,
And seemed to read my features by the light
Of some strange faculty. I asked her what
She saw, and she said—Blood; then, pointing to
The Palace-gate, she charg'd me in the names
Of Love and Loyalty to go no more.
I started at one word—the word was Love,
And turning back a few bright leaves of time

I read it there, even as the Beldam told me,
And saw my guilt reveal'd. "But was it guilt?
"Is madness guilt? Is love that asks for nought
"But pity, guilt? If so, 'tis well revenged,
"And need not suffer more."—How, now, who 's there?

Enter GARCIA.

GARCIA.

A Friend.

RIZZIO.

Ha, Garcia!

GARCIA.

E'en the same, though changed
In fortune, and confounded by th' events
Around me;—Have you thought, what 's to be done?

RIZZIO.

We must away from Scotland.

GARCIA.

So, 'tis best.
The Bayonne League has raised all hands against us;
And now another whisper goes abroad:
They say that Ruthven's daughter pines to death.

RIZZIO.

Indeed!

GARCIA.

'Tis so reported.

RIZZIO.

Go; bid our friends prepare.

GARCIA.

They wait, concealed, below.

RIZZIO.

I 'll come to you,
When I have bade the Queen a last farewell.

GARCIA.

Nay, come at once.—The sight of her will lead
Your captive senses from the path: beware.

RIZZIO.

'Tis now too late;—she's here:—I prithee leave me.

[*Exit* GARCIA.

How like what we believe of angels, is
What we behold of her!

Enter QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Rizzio, well met:
You 've come to wish me joy the tumult 's o'er.
Is it not so?

RIZZIO.

From my full heart I wish it.

QUEEN.

But tell me how did Ruthven speak?—You heard him.

RIZZIO.

Like one inspired. The spirit of rebuke
Swept thunder from his lips; nay, triumph'd o'er
The rheums, that bent his frame;—as if to shew
What mind can do with matter, and the fire
Of genius with the shell in which it burns:—
But I have other news to mix with it,
That will not sound so well: the Lady Catherine ——

QUEEN.

Ah! what of her?

RIZZIO.

'Tis feared her death draws nigh.

QUEEN.

There is an envious malice in the stars,
That will not let me smile, but I must weep for 't.

RIZZIO.

O! may those tears be dried by happier hands
Than hers or mine, for we must both away;
I 've come to take my leave.

QUEEN.

That 's sudden too:
Must all I love, then, leave me?

RIZZIO.

On my knees
I bless thee for that word:—'tis balm to grief,—
'Tis life to death,—'tis transport to despair!

QUEEN.

What have I said? Oh, Rizzio! if I spoke
Too strongly what I felt, should you —— farewell—
Be generous, be just; forget it, and
Let me forget it.

RIZZIO.

Ah! recall it not,
For fear of me, or what my hopes may claim.
If I could cherish even a wish that wrong'd you,
These hands should tear this body from this soul,
As worthless of its human covering!

QUEEN.

Enough: I do believe, and pity thee;
But yonder comes Argyle:—Leave me at once.

RIZZIO.

So soon?

QUEEN.

'Tis short in act, but in remembrance
'Twill last for ever:—yet, there 's something else
I would have said.

RIZZIO.

I'll stay till you recall it.

QUEEN.

No, no! 'tis fitting you should leave me now;
But come again to-night; and yet a voice
Of terror seems to echo back my words,
As if they were forbidden.

RIZZIO.

Gracious Queen, let not your fears impede the only glimpse
That I shall ever catch of happiness,—
You said, to-night!

QUEEN.

Once more, and that the last,—
To-night I 'll see thee. [*Exit.*

RIZZIO.

Yes, though death himself
Stood at the door, I 'd brave his worst to enter. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in RUTHVEN'S *House.*

Enter MORTON, *and other Conspirators.*

MORTON.

The mob went further than 'twas our intent
They should have gone; but Ruthven soon recall'd them,
And saved appearances.

DOUGLAS.

'Twas well-timed vigour:—But what 's the gain,
If Rizzio still must lord it
O'er King and Nobles?—

MORTON.

Nay, have patience, George:
We 've met to fix his fate.

DOUGLAS.

Where is the King?
Where 's Ruthven?

MORTON.

Still, I say, have patience, man.
Ruthven, you know, besides his malady,
Is troubled for his child; and though he puts
A stern face on his grief, it may be seen through.
To-day he bit his lips, not knowing what
He did, till blood ran from them, and at times
You 'll hear a smother'd groan, stopping half-way,
As if it met some thought of pride, that strove
In vain to choke it.

MORTON.

Said you not, he promised,
In case of Rizzio's death, to bind the King
To our support by something stronger than
His own capricious will?

MORTON.

He 'll keep his promise too.
But see, they come together. Welcome to
Your Majesty; and Ruthven, welcome home.

Enter DARNLEY *and* RUTHVEN.

DARNLEY.

Now, friends, you see what Scotland's court is come to,
And Scotland's King and people! Foreigners
Sit in high places: nay, insult us with
Impunity, and mock the power they fear not.

DOUGLAS.

And that Italian dog, the worst amongst 'em,
Usurps the very throne.

DARNLEY.

Our business is,
To settle here, what vengeance we shall take.

LINDSAY.

Could we not still contrive to banish him?

RUTHVEN.

Ay—banish him. [*Sneeringly.*

LINDSAY.

We've ships enough.

MORTON.

And goodly fortresses:
I've great faith in the virtue of stone walls.

CHALMERS.

My soul's so eager to be rid of him,
And with him all his crew, that either course
Will please me well, if it be promptly taken.

DOUGLAS.

What says Lord Ruthven?

RUTHVEN.

That my head is pained.

MORTON.

His heart more likely; 'tis the thought of his
Poor child, that sinks him.

DOUGLAS.

Is't your old complaint?

RUTHVEN.

Not so—but there are counsels sicken me
As much as that, or more. I hate half measures,—
I hate to see a spider spin his entrails
To catch a fly. There was a time when men
Looked to their own good swords to rid them of
Their enemies:—It worked well, and saved trouble—
But now, simplicity is out of fashion,
And crookedness the rage.

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, my friend,
You give the best advice. Death—Death alone,
And the dark wrapper of eternal night,
Can lay his evil spirit low enough.

LINDSAY.

If 'tis your Majesty's desire, and Ruthven's.

DARNLEY.

'Tis mine as well. I 'm for the long remove.

RUTHVEN.

What is 't we seek to rid us of? A pair
Of hands, and other limbs, endued with motion?
If so, let them be tied. But no—'tis mind,—
The subtile power, that, with invisible organs
Acting upon the strange events of time,
Makes all things possible:—to conquer that,
We must extinguish it.

LINDSAY.

Then be it so.

MORTON.

Are we agreed?

Conspirators.

All—all.

RUTHVEN.

Naught else remains
But that we set to work like men prepared
For the world's judgment. We shall have the Queen—
The Queen and her revenge to cope withal.

DARNLEY.

But I am with you: I am one of you.
My sanction 's your support.

RUTHVEN.

On that we build, Sir.

Here is a paper, drawn up in the sense

[*Presents a paper to* DARNLEY.

Of such a declaration. Look: it states,
That you approve the death of David Rizzio:
No more:—sign that, and Rizzio's race is run.
You start, Sir; what 's the matter?

DARNLEY.

Would you bind me
By such a fastening as was meant to hold
The slippery knave to his engagements? Would you
Deal with a King, as with a trickster?

RUTHVEN.

Sir,
Our friends are here to answer for themselves.
My mind 's made up for the security.

[*Flings the paper on the table.*

DOUGLAS.

And so is mine.

All.

And ours.

RUTHVEN.

You hear them, Sir!

DARNLEY.

Yet give me leave—I 'd speak a word with you
Alone. [*to* RUTHVEN.

RUTHVEN.

At your good pleasure, Sir. Pray, leave us, friends;
Your cause is safe with me. I 'll not be fool'd.

[*Aside to Conspirators as they go out.*

DARNLEY.

Shut close the door, and let me have your patience.
Oh, Ruthven! you have cut me to the soul.

Bonds, as the word denotes, are shameful ties:
They bind by force and fear; and he who signs one,
Confesses to the base necessity.

RUTHVEN.

I cannot see this nice distinction, Sir,—
An oath 's a bond,—a promise is a bond,—
A simple aye, or any dumb denotement—
Jove's was a nod—are bonds: the writing down
Is the preserving process, that defends,
And not degrades it.

DARNLEY

Ah! dost doubt me, then?

RUTHVEN.

I love plain language, and am nothing loath
To answer to straight-forward questioning
In its own spirit. I do doubt you, Sir.

DARNLEY.

What right have you to doubt a sovereign's word?

RUTHVEN.

I have a right to doubt an angel's word,
When character 's at stake. Sir, we 're all men,—
The palace and the cottage mark our place,
But alter not our nature. Minds will change;
And circumstance, occasion's common drudge,
Assails the strongest of us. If the deed
Were done—I mean, the deed that takes off Rizzio,
And you, from any cause, disclaimed your share in 't—
What would become of us, your instruments?
The brand of an appalling infamy—
The name of murderer—if not the fate—
(And the name's worse) would mark the world's opinion.

DARNLEY.

But if his punishment be due to justice,
What signifies the world—or what it says?

RUTHVEN.

It signifies the world—that 's every thing—
If I must spurn opinion, shew me to
A cell where I can hide, and slap the grating
In the world's face:—But to defy the world
And live in 't is impossible!

DARNLEY.

Will not
An oath suffice for your security?—

RUTHVEN.

Look up into the region of the air!
'Tis almost made of broken promises,
Of words and oaths!—Yet where 's the trace to tell
Who made and broke them? Why, compar'd with this—
And this is the security you 'd give me!—
The wounded bark is an eternal record:—
There 's more endurance in the imprinted sand,
While waiting for the wave:—Sign, and be done.

DARNLEY.

I 'll swear, but cannot sign.

RUTHVEN.

Good bye to you!

DARNLEY.

Hold, Ruthven!—Would you leave me?

RUTHVEN.

Rather than
Be made a cat's-paw, Sir, I 'd leave the world
To kittens and their tricks. The Queen may hold
Her revels now, and sit up all night long,

With dance, and music, and the flattery
Of fools, to keep her wakeful.

DARNLEY.

You distract me!—
Stay—where 's the paper?

RUTHVEN.

There, before you, Sir. [*Pointing to the table.*
Remember, when you sign, that Rizzio dies—
The Queen submits—the House of Douglas reigns—
These are the issues of that simple act,
Which, tracing on the paper but a name,
Gives in return a kingdom and revenge.
Ha! do you pause?

[DARNLEY *hesitates, but at length snatches up the pen, and signs.*

DARNLEY.

Let me— 'tis done, and now
I 'm in your power.

RUTHVEN.

Nay, nay, you 're flurried, Sir, (*taking the paper*)
Compose yourself.

DARNLEY.

Yet give me back the scroll :—
If after all he 's innocent,—or if ——

RUTHVEN.

Why look you now, what weakness you betray!
One moment raving! and the next repenting!
By Heaven! there 's more soul in a lighted faggot
Than such a man!

DARNLEY.

Ah, now indeed I feel
I 'm in your power.

RUTHVEN.

'Tis better so, than at
The mercy of your own discretion.
Yet, be a man; take courage in the thought,
That Rizzio's knell is toll'd.

DARNLEY.

When shall he die?

RUTHVEN.

Before another morrow. See, the shades
Of evening 'gin to draw their misty hoods
Around them, and the mountains frown like fate;
'Twill be an awful night, a busy night,
A bloody night—but Scotland will be free.
How now! who knocks? Whate'er thou art, come forth.
Seek you the King?

Enter MORTON, *and other Conspirators.*

MORTON.

Ruthven, 'tis you we seek.
Your daughter——

RUTHVEN.

What of her? my daughter? quick.

MORTON.

Controul yourself, my friend: be Ruthven still:
Her life is ebbing fast; and nothing would
Content her, till her maidens brought her here,
To beg your parting blessing, ere she die.

RUTHVEN.

There are some hearts that break: 'tis happy for them.

MORTON.

[*To the other Conspirators.*

Let's leave them to their melancholy meeting.

[*Exeunt Conspirators.*

[*As the Conspirators go out,* CATHERINE *is borne in.*

My child, what 's this I hear ? They talk of death—
But 'tis their talk. Ah me ! you look it too !—
Yet looks deceive us oft ; and yours will mend—
Smile on me, Kate ;—but smile.

CATHERINE.

Are we alone ?

RUTHVEN.

Away from all the world.

CATHERINE.

Then give me your
Last blessing, father.

RUTHVEN.

Not, O ! not the last !
I 'll bless you, as I bless you every night,
To do so when the morning wakes again,
But not to seal the parting, that 's eternal.

CATHERINE.

The morn will wake again, but not to me :
Yet, ere I die, let me entreat one favour.

RUTHVEN.

Oh Kate, my very soul 's at your command,
Ask what you will that 's not impossible,
And live, and take it.

CATHERINE.

Then, my father, shun,
Forego the crime, for which you 're leagued with monsters,
Made out of men.

RUTHVEN.

What mean'st thou ?

CATHERINE.

Look—this paper *(shewing a paper)*,
Knowest thou this paper ?

RUTHVEN.

'Tis a letter from
The Earl of Morton.

CATHERINE.

Planning Rizzio's death.

RUTHVEN.

Give it me back. Curse on the luckless chance,
That lost it from my keeping!

CATHERINE.

Rather bless it
As I do, if it guide your child to save you;
For 'tis salvation in a stronger sense
To rescue and prevent a man from murdering,
E'en than from being murdered.

RUTHVEN.

'Tis not murder.

CATHERINE.

Not murder! What! to kill the innocent!

RUTHVEN.

They are not innocent.

CATHERINE.

They are! they are!
But e'en if not, still what have you to do
With Heaven's eternal functions? O! this work
Of retribution in a human hand!
'Tis havock and not justice—help! I faint.

RUTHVEN. *(Snatching her in his arms.)*

Look up, my child! my Kate! 'tis granted, all,
Rizzio 's safe.—The Queen is pure—the world
May revel, till it rot, ere I complain,
So thou 'lt but give me back the life I live in
More than my own.

CATHERINE.

I cannot: my strength fails—
My heart is stopped—Oh Father! [*dies.*

RUTHVEN.

Speak again!
She 's dead!—is death so short a ceremony?—
'Tis but one pang—one moment's deeper faint—
And nothing more. Kate! do you hear me, Kate?
Not all the air that floats 'twixt this and Heaven,
Can lend her one short breath; no, not so much
As would make up a sigh to answer me.
Ha! Morton!

Enter MORTON.

MORTON.

Come, my friend, this is no place
For you to linger in. You must part.

RUTHVEN.

I know it.
There 's one was here before you, who has parted us,
And far enough.

MORTON.

Nay, you must go from hence.
Gaze not upon the dead: 'twill but distract you.

RUTHVEN.

I had a dream last night, that told me all.

MORTON.

Dismiss, forget it now—his mind 's unsettled.

RUTHVEN.

Methought I saw the lonely power of death,
With his pale crown, sitting upon a Throne
Of ruin;—Though he had more subjects than
The living world contains, they were to him
As nothing—for his attributes were nothing;
And his strange life—the life of death—was nothing.

Methought I saw the lonely Potentate,
Upon his breathless bosom lay his hand,
And then a thrill ran through my frame, which told me
I had passed under his dominion.

MORTON.

It shakes your soul too much to think of it.

RUTHVEN.

Next came the horrid chill of night and darkness,
That, like an ugly monster, swallowed up
The shape of things. Motion was at an end,
And form—The winds were hushed, the sea was mute,
The sky was voiceless, and the Earth itself
As silent as the moon. I strove to shake
The stupor from my senses, and at length
Burst the fell bondage of the grisly King,——
I woke, but O, to what reality?
Let me not think on 't. No—she 's gone, and fate
Has done its worst!—There 's comfort in that worst.
Proud scorn and fierce defiance are the passions
It sends to fight with lamentation,—
There is no terror now for me in things
Most terrible!—I love to see the storm
Shake from its fiery lap the seeds of death
Upon the wind, and rush from Heaven to Hell!—
I love to see the high wave dash the orbs
Of light, and feel the earth shake under me,
When ruin pelts it with the driving blast,
And plays the devil in the hurricane!

MORTON.

O, come, my friend!

RUTHVEN.

Lead where you will—I care not. [*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter QUEEN, *and* COUNTESS *of* ARGYLE.

QUEEN.

Lord Ruthven, to request an interview!
What can his purpose be?

ARGYLE.

Mayhap to speak
Of his bereavement.

QUEEN.

No; he 's not a man
To care for sympathy: more like he comes
To bend my resolution to the King:
But he may spare his pains, if that 's his mission—
Go, Countess—wait without—he 's coming hither.

[ARGYLE *exit, as* RUTHVEN *enters.*

My Lord of Ruthven, I am sorry for
Your trouble, which is shared by many here.

RUTHVEN.

Thanks to your Majesty—'Twas hard upon me,
For I had nature's passport to precedence;
But death 's no courtier. To the purpose, though—
Before my daughter died, she charged me with
A last request, that in its spirit led
To this our meeting—I would heal the breach
That severs, as it were, the throne in two;

'Tis like the cleaving of the head of empire,
Destructive in its certain consequence.

QUEEN.

Whate'er the consequence, the King's to blame.

RUTHVEN.

No, Madam, Rizzio is to blame—the King
Would banish him: your Majesty protects him;
And, for a slave—a wretch not worth a thought—
This mighty State is threatened with destruction,
If neither will give way.

QUEEN.

And if one should,
You think it ought to be the Queen?—My Lord,
In that our politics agree not.

RUTHVEN.

Yet,
There 's no disgrace in drawing back a step
That rashly was put forward.

QUEEN.

Rashly, Sir!

RUTHVEN.

Your pardon, Madam; if I may not speak
Out plainly, I had better hold my tongue.
Was it not rash to take the part of any man
Against the King, your husband?

QUEEN.

Darest thou then,
Presume, as he presumed, to talk of guilt?

RUTHVEN.

No, Madam; not of guilt in its full meaning:
But there 's a sort of guilt in innocence,
And weakness is its name. You are bewitched

By this curst sorcerer. What is this Rizzio,
That you should throw before him as a shield,
Your reputation? Or, is reputation
So light a thing? If 'tis not virtue's self,
It is the outward form we know it by,
And we should love it dearer than our own,
For virtue's sake—Madam, the world condemns you.

QUEEN.

You and your friends?

RUTHVEN.

I and the rest of men.
We say that Rizzio is an evil spirit
Haunting your matron bosom. Scotland hates him:
Your husband hates him: you, if you had eyes
To see what deep affliction springs from weakness,
Would shun him, banish him, be rid of him;
And if you could not hate himself, would hate
His sight, like infamy: there 's ruin in 't,
And scandal, and remorse, and scorn, and shame.
Upon my knees I pray your Majesty,
Spurn not my words, because the words are mine;
But lay them to your heart; and let them speak
To the inward monitor.

QUEEN.

Am I thus fallen
To be rebuked and lectured like a criminal?
But I 'll not weep—no—are you not ashamed,
Old man, to take the part of cruelty
Against the unoffending and the weak?
Rizzio has done no wrong, and therefore he
Shall suffer none.

RUTHVEN.

Then I 've no more to say. My business was
But to acquit my conscience and my heart

To her who is no more.—Madam, you 've sealed
The fate of Rizzio.

QUEEN.

Ha! What say'st thou? Dare
To raise a finger in the way of harm
'Gainst him or any whom the Queen protects,
And you shall find that vengeance does not sleep,
But for refreshment. Tell the King of this,
And try your strength combined to alter it. [*Exit.*

RUTHVEN.

We 'll take you at your word, imperious woman,
And sooner than you dream of.

Enter DARNLEY *and Conspirators.*

Welcome, Sir!
And you, my friends—welcome to each. You 're come
In time to find me all your own. The Queen
Is bent on Rizzio's stay.

DARNLEY.

I told you so—
You 've done with scruples now, I hope?

RUTHVEN.

For ever.

DARNLEY.

Then let us settle on the final plan.
Morton has just relieved the guard, whose charge
Is filled by others in our confidence.

MORTON.

But is it certain Rizzio sups to-night
In the Queen's closet with the Queen?

DOUGLAS.

For certain
He does intend it.

CHALMERS.

Shall we seize him as
He passes through the court-yard, and dispatch him?

DARNLEY.

Not so; the Queen, who shared his crime, should share
His punishment. Let 's watch him to her closet,
And there, before her face, inflict the blow.

DOUGLAS.

And let there be no shrinking when we come to 't.
If he should 'scape, my mother in her grave
Would give a sullen groan. The villain dared ——

RUTHVEN.

Hush! the man 's dead.

DOUGLAS.

Dead!

RUTHVEN.

Ay, in destiny
Already dead, if we 're all men, or any of us.

MORTON.

Is every thing prepared?

DOUGLAS.

Ripe for the blow.

MORTON.

George Douglas, be 't your task to keep an eye
Upon his movements, till he 's safely lodged,
And then to bring us word.

DOUGLAS.

Depend upon 't
I 'll not lose sight of him.

DARNLEY.

Ruthven, you droop—
Nay, rouse yourself!—Remember, you 're our leader.

RUTHVEN.

I do.

DARNLEY.

But are you sure that your late loss
Hath left no drop of weakness after it,
Which, at the moment, may unnerve your hand?

RUTHVEN.

You 've heard the story of a lioness
That saw her young whelp by the hunter speared
One glorious day of chase. Furious she sprang
From the thick jungle at the multitude,
And made more havoc in their ranks than wildfire
In brambles, till she fell. Nor quailed she then;
For when she fell, 'twas at the bleeding side
Of her own offspring stretched in death. Close, close
As mothers lie, she lay to 't; stroked the skin
By hunters rudely torn, and with a lick,
Which was her kiss, pierced by a hundred wounds,
Amidst a thousand shouts, she died lamenting
The baby brute that from her fearful breast
Drew milk and tenderness. Such as that mother,
Am I a father. Such the grief I feel.
Come, follow me, and you shall own its greatness.

[*Exeunt all but* DOUGLAS *and* CHALMERS.

DOUGLAS.

Stay, Chalmers;—a man likes to have a comrade
Upon the watch.

CHALMERS.

We 've watched together, George,
Before to-night, but not in such a camp.
Well; Scotland must be saved.

DOUGLAS.

Look! is that he?

CHALMERS.

'Tis he and his friend Garcia.

DOUGLAS.

This way !—this way !
They must not find us here at such an hour.

[*They conceal themselves.*

Enter RIZZIO, *and* GARCIA.

GARCIA.

I knew how 't would be when you met the Queen ;—
But is 't not rash to venture now again.
The ship is ready, and your friends are waiting—
All are embarked : they look impatient for
Your coming, to set sail.

RIZZIO.

What—should I break
My promise ?

GARCIA.

Should you risk your life, and those
Of others, who depend on you ?

RIZZIO.

Nay, nay ;
We 're not in Turkey, amongst infidels,
" That we should dread the bow-string."

GARCIA.

But we 're in
A land of enemies; and when a Christian
Turns Devil, " he 's a match for any Mussulman."

RIZZIO.

Out, out ! you let your terrors chill your manhood.
I have engaged to play a requiem
For the departed soul of that sweet maid,
Whose love you charge me with. My harp is in
The closet now, and only waits my hand.

GARCIA.

Well, if you must, I wish you well—that 's all;
For, more than wish it is impossible. [*Exit.*

RIZZIO.

How awful is this midnight sleep and silence!
The lamps burn dimly in the corridor;
The wind sighs mournful through the empty rooms
Of state, like wisdom whispering vanity,
And all the flaunting plumes that waved aloft,
Like sea foam, on the billows of the main,
Are, with the wearers, vanished. So it is
With life; yet, let me while I may, enjoy—
Yonder 's the door that in its keeping holds
The richest treasure of the bounteous earth;—
I 'll bless my senses with the sight of it. [*Exit.*

Re-enter DOUGLAS.

DOUGLAS (*speaking to* CHALMERS).

Go, Chalmers; follow Garcia; seize him, lest
He cause some interruption to our course.
Ha, the door opens! Rizzio enters, and [CHALMERS *exit.*
It closes after him! He 's safe within!
I 've tracked him into covert—now for the hunters! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The QUEEN'S *Closet.*

The QUEEN *and* COUNTESS *of* ARGYLE *seated at table.* RIZZIO *at the harp.*

RIZZIO *sings.*

When the dead sleep
'Tis weakness to weep;

Their sorrows are past,
And the hope that will last,
Is that which looks over the Earth's narrow sphere,
For the summer is there, but the winter is here.
" When the dead rise
" From earth to the skies,
" Subdued is the night
" By the angel of light,
" And banished for ever's mortality's tear,
" For the summer is there, but the winter is here."

QUEEN.

Thanks, Rizzio, for this sweetly plaintive strain.
Which haply we shall never hear beyond
The echoes of this night. Why do you rise?

RIZZIO.

O! Madam, I am sick with melancholy,
Dark thoughts of death, and parting, worse than death,
Fall on my heart, like shadows on a tomb.
" I 'll gaze upon this outward scene awhile,
" And think myself a spirit in yon sky, [*Going to the window.*
" And so forget the grief that troubles me.
" Look up, sweet Queen, and see with what a smile
" The current of the night runs on to morn.
" What is this wondrous universe, in midst
" Of which we seem to stand?—What are those orbs,
" And this surrounding sky, so richly wrought
" With gold, and painted with Heaven's light?—is this
" A frame to set so poor a picture in,
" As man? If so, there are, there must be, in him
" Great seeds, that shoot above the size of time;
" Immortal faculties, that grow for ever:
" Yes, even the breaking of the day-light sheds
" A revelation on his destiny."

ARGYLE.

The wine cup, Signor, has a charm, they say,
To lift up sinking hearts; taste, taste, and try;
And if you 'd have a name to grace the act,
Drink to the Queen. [*Gives a cup.*

RIZZIO.

The Queen! (*drinks.*) I feel refreshed.
No wonder wretchedness should fly to thee,
Thou bold artificer of unmade fortunes,
That spurn'st the dull routine events are chained in,
Laugh'st in the face of half-relenting truth,
And mak'st the slave a king. I feel thy power,
And thus I use the strength it girds me with,
To kneel where every heart should pay devotion,
And worship virtue's self in beauty's form.
[*Kneels to the Queen.*

QUEEN.

Nay, rise, and mock me not with praise: thy speech
Would better suit an angel's excellence.

RIZZIO.

Then what art thou, bright vision of my soul,
That look'st as heaven were here? Ah! must I go
From hence, for ever into banishment?
O Queen! I 'm punished, and I well deserve it;
For let me now confess I have deceived
Myself and thee:—I was the willing dupe
Of mine own artifice. 'Twas love alone
That, covered with the name of gratitude,
Lurk'd in my treacherous heart.

QUEEN.

Why have you told
A secret that should never see the light?

RIZZIO.

Because I have not e'en the virtue to

Conceal it. Seeing how you pitied me,
And, in your gracious favour, took my part,
I saw my crime, but saw not to correct it.
E'en now, I cannot, must not, will not leave thee,
Though death and ruin be my portion here.

QUEEN.

O Rizzio! when too late, I see my own
Rash conduct too; I 've been to blame for much
Of this distress and error: I have acted
Lightly, not guiltily; but guilt and shame
Have small beginnings both: 'tis hell's device
To plunge it's victim into hopeless crime.

[*A noise outside—they all start.*

What sound was that?

ARGYLE.

It was an awful sound:
I 'll seek to find the cause. [*Exit.*

QUEEN.

Rizzio, if aught
Of ill should fall on thee, for my sake, how
Could I support it?

RIZZIO.

Be not downcast, Madam.
We 're in your palace, and your palace is
The seat of your security, where all
Your crowned ancestors have kept their state:
Their memories are like ethereal guards,
And, with a charge from Heaven, they banish insult.

QUEEN.

Still, still, a sad foreboding shakes my soul—
The hour, the previous silence, and that sound!
The shudder of an earthquake seemed to follow it.

[COUNTESS *of* ARGYLE *rushes in, and throws herself at the* QUEEN'S *feet.*

How now, Argyle! What means that look of fright?
Speak out at once—say something, or do something
To snatch us from our fear.

ARGYLE.

O Madam! madam!
When I have breath, I 'll tell you—There 's some evil
On foot within the palace.

QUEEN.

What? from whom?
Have you seen aught that showed this horror to you?

ARGYLE.

I have;—in th' outward porch, I saw a group
Of men, all armed:—the King, the King, was with 'em.

RIZZIO.

Then, 'tis my life they seek!

QUEEN.

But hear her! hear her!

ARGYLE.

Amongst the rest, was Ruthven, clad in steel.
Hark! 'twas the crash of armour. [*A crash is heard.*

QUEEN.

No; 'twas but
The wind; secure the door—bolt it.

ARGYLE.

'Tis fast. [*They secure the door.*

RIZZIO.

I hear the sound of footsteps.

QUEEN.

Heavenly powers!
O Rizzio, fear not: still the Queen protects thee.

RIZZIO.

The sound comes still!

QUEEN.

What's to be done? Yon window—
O no; the height's too great. Oh, powers of Heaven!
Ye, ye alone, can shield us—save us!

[*The tapestry which covers a secret door is raised, and* RUTHVEN *appears in armour at the head of the Conspirators—except* MORTON.

QUEEN.

(shrieks.) Ah! [*rushing down with* RIZZIO *and* ARGYLE.
Pale warrior, com'st thou from the realm unknown,
A semblance only of the man thou wast;
But art no longer? or is't life we see,
So like to death that we are horrified?
Speak to me;—wilt not speak?—then, Darnley, tell me
What are these men; why are they here in arms?
Are these companions for a lady's chamber,
Or suit they with a Queen's?

DARNLEY.

They better suit it
Than one I here behold, standing behind thee.

RUTHVEN.

Rizzio, come forth!

QUEEN.

'Tis Ruthven speaks at last,
And murder sounds in every frightful tone.
Ho! there!—Call in the guard!

DARNLEY.

The guard is here.

QUEEN.

What! are my faithful sentinels exchanged
For such as these, whose watch is like the wolf's,
Not for defence, but for aggression?

RUTHVEN.

Madam,
I did not mean to speak: I came to act;
But as your Majesty will have it otherwise,
I must obey the call. You see before you
A living man, but dying as he lives;
A dying man, but living to perform
An act of cold and calm severity,
By justice self imposed. Nay, madam, frown not,
Nor think to look me down. I have no fear;
Or if I had, I 've nothing now to fear for.
Old, desolate, and childless, here I stand—
I am not of your kind, nor of your clan,
Nor of your world; but dead alike to all;—
Yet I 've a sense of what I owe my country,
And that hath brought me, lock'd in martial mail,
Against whose iron ribs your words are dash'd,
In striking at my heart. (*Thunder.*) Hark! 'tis Heaven's voice
Which says this hour must end the guilty joys
Of Holyrood for ever.

QUEEN.

Darnley, are you
A husband or a King?—a peasant's wife
Would not have need to ask for vengeance, if
She suffered such an insult in his presence!

RIZZIO.

The Queen is innocent, and I 'm defenceless.

Look ! I'm unarmed, and you are cased in steel:
I'm one, and you are many : spare me, therefore.

RUTHVEN.

Rizzio, come forth !—too long have you disgraced
That place, poisoning the ear of Majesty.
Rizzio, come forth ! Let go the Queen's robe, caitiff.
Thus then, with the last effort of a hand
That once might pluck the giant from his bed,
Or heap, like Jove, th' eternal mountains on him,
I drag thee to thy fate.

[*As he rushes towards* RIZZIO *the* QUEEN *interposes.*

QUEEN.

Hold off ! hold off
Thy hand from the thrice blessed life of man !
Strike not the great Creator in his image !

RUTHVEN.

There is a freezing horror in your words—
But justice must be done—away with him !

[*Flings* RIZZIO *amongst the Conspirators, who drag him off the stage*—RUTHVEN *following.*

QUEEN.

Murder !—they 'll shed his blood ! his guiltless blood !
Will no one save him from these savages ?
Oh Heaven ! 'tis on thy mercy that I call
For vengeance ! O, be merciful, and kill
These killers ! [*Enter* MELVILLE *from folding doors.*
Now, good Melville, is there hope ?

MELVILLE.

Madam—

QUEEN.

Speak ! speak ! is he alive or dead ?

MELVILLE.

He 's past the reach of help or injury—
Ha! look to the Queen! she faints! [*He rushes towards her.*

QUEEN.

No; no more fainting—
Ruthven again! How 's this?—He glares more like
A wounded tiger than a dying man.

[RUTHVEN *totters in, and sinks on a couch.*

RUTHVEN.

Fetch me a cup of wine.

QUEEN.

Out, blood-stained monster!
Nor dare to ask for aught. Fetch him a cup
Of fire, that he may drink as demons drink,
For he is one. [*The Queen faints.*

RUTHVEN.

I feel as if I lack'd
The strength to die. Will no one help me to 't?

MELVILLE.

Here 's wine. [*Gives him a cup.*

RUTHVEN.

Thanks! thanks! there 's vigour in the draught.
Where am I?—Wine!—more wine! How dark it is!
Midnight is not so dark. The stars have dropped
Into the Nadyr, and the Zenyth thunders
Like an uplifted hell-storm o'er my head.
Hush! there 's a voice upon the wind.—Who spoke?
Who said the heavens are wrathful at the deed?
Who dared to breathe that Ruthven is a murderer?
For Scotland—'Twas for Scotland—for our country.
Attest it, powers above, we struck for right—

For right.—'Tis doomsday with mankind,—
The pillars of the sky are tumbling—
And all created nature feels the shock
Of the main works above. Rage on, rage on—
Ye dreadful sweepings of the thunder store;
Scatter me, bones and all, to the wind's fury.
Still I repeat, it was a rightful blow.
'Twas for our Country! 'Twas—'twas for our Country! [*dies.*

THE END.

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